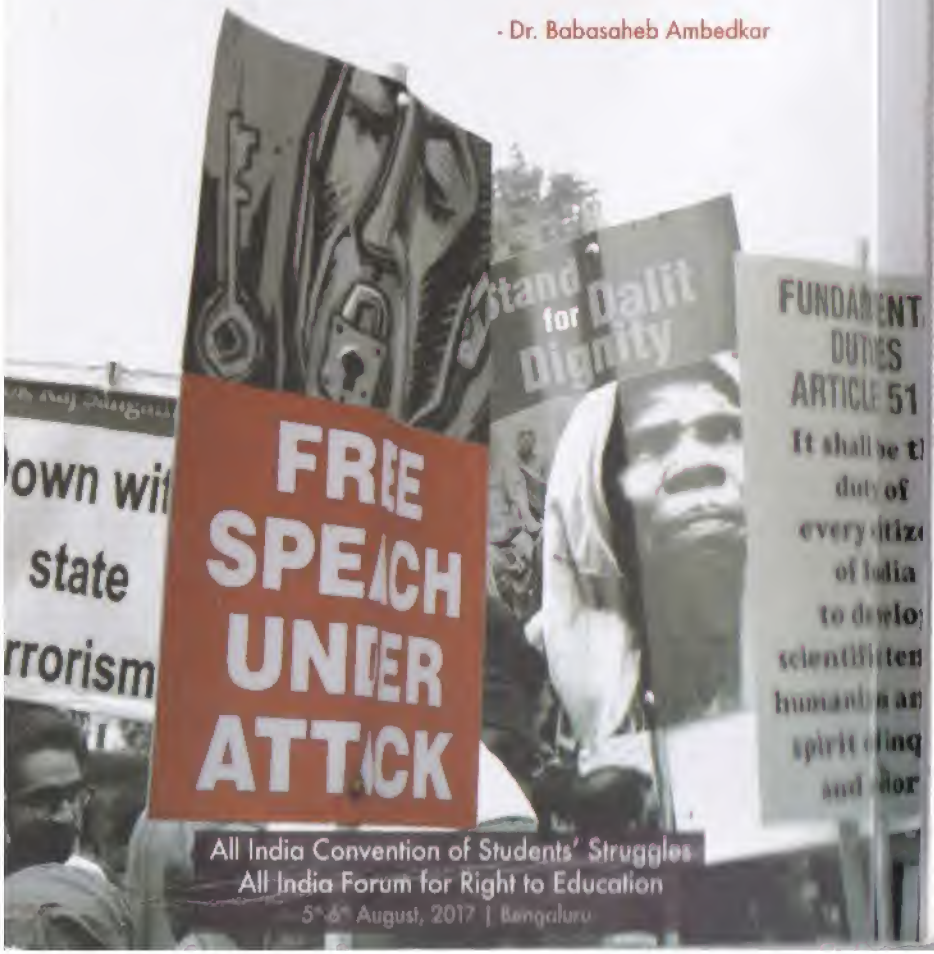
"My final words of advice to you are educate, agitate and organize; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or social in it. For ours is a battle, not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of human personality"

- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar



All India Convention of Students' Struggles
All India Forum for Right to Education
5th-6th August, 2017 | Bengaluru

Student Movements in India

New Wave of

Student Movements in India

Stories of Resistance from Indian Campuses

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IIT Bombay

New Wave of **Student Movements** in India

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ALL INDIA CONVENTION OF STUDENTS' STRUGGLES
Bengaluru, 5-6 August 2017

All India Forum for Right to Education

New Wave of Student Movements in India
Stories of Resistance from Indian Campuses

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Student Protest in Delhi after the JNU Incident
"The JNU Outrage", The Kashmir Walla. March, 2016.
Photo: Tanushree Bhasin

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Student Protest in Delhi
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Bringing out this volume of narratives of students' struggles from all over the country – from Kerala to Kashmir and Kutch to Kohima - turned out to be a far more complex task than what we had imagined. Persuading the fighting students' organizations to take time out, while under the state's increasing assault, to recall and reflect upon their rich experience of struggle, called from the young minds a sense of history and faith in an alternative vision of society. This is what precisely they did demonstrate and contributed to this volume at a very short notice. In particular we thank Ms. Subhashini Shriya of Pinjara Tod Movement at Delhi University who showed immense persuasive acumen to collect narratives from various students' movements.

We were fortunate to receive an offer from Ajmal Khan, a Ph.D. scholar from TISS, Mumbai, who is part of the collective which has been bringing out AAGHAAZ magazine, compiling stories of resistance by the students in various Indian campuses. He readily took over the responsibility of editing the narratives and organizing them in the form of a book by putting in endless exhausting hours of work. If the manuscript took shape to be sent to the printer in less than a week, the credit goes entirely to Ajmal. More importantly, he mobilized all the resources and experience of the AAGHAAZ team to access the narratives published therein and designing the cover. Yet, he took the stance that he is doing all this "as part of his political responsibility to the students' movement."

AIFRTE expresses its gratitude to all the contributors to this volume and to the student members of the Editorial Collective which made the publication of this Convention Edition possible. We would look forward to more of this moral and editorial support in future so that the next edition will be far more elaborate, self-reflective and richer in analysis than what has been possible in the rush to the Convention. Hopefully, the next addition will also be brought out in various Indian languages - a dream that we couldn't fulfill this time.

Sri Girish Thaalikatte of Bangalore deserves a special word of appreciation for re-formatting and designing the book on a priority basis. This he did due to his commitment to the educational movement we are engaged with.

We will be failing in our duty if we don't record here the amazing speed at which M/s Sreeranga Graphics, Bangalore, Karnataka completed the printing task within two days despite an intervening day of festival. AIFRTE, therefore, salutes the capable workers of the printing press who made this expeditious printing possible.

Presidium and Secretariat
All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE)

All India Students' struggles:
An overview

The All India Convention of Students' Struggles is held in the backdrop of the rising fascist forces and their attack on the basic Constitutional morality and democratic foundations of Indian polity and society. These forces which were dormant for a long time picked up force and gathered courage in the wake of anti-people neo-liberal economic model which could be inflicted on the society only with the backup of fascist forces. This unholy nexus between Hindu fundamentalism and neo-liberal model is pushing Indian ruling classes towards authoritarian and hegemonic governance. Indian democracy which is fragile and feeble is being subverted by these anti-democratic socio–political forces as they consider democratic freedoms as road block to their acquisitive and ambitious plans for accumulation of wealth at the expense of the welfare of the large millions of toiling masses of this country. Peoples' welfare has come to be considered as a burden and unburdening is viewed as a part of growth strategy. The rate of growth is considered sin qua non of progress. This has removed human being and replaced it with material advancement not even realising that such anti-human growth is perilous not only to the people but to the rulers themselves.

It is this ruthless and rootless growth strategy that ruined the entire agricultural economy leading to disastrous consequence in the form of three lakh farmers committing suicide. There is hardly any expansion in the manufacturing sector. All the myth of growth is more due to selling the raw mineral wealth at one level and artificial stimulation of economy by imperialist financial capital. Nation is surrendering its sovereign power and its freedom to decide its own future. It is precisely for this reason that politics of this country shifted the discourse and direction from the basic socio-economic questions like poverty, hunger, growing inequalities to background shifting the emphasis to culture and perversions in

social life are strikingly hitting the secular and pluralistic way of life of the society.

It is this context that resulted in attack on the educational institutions and their autonomous and democratic culture. The global capital in nexus with the corporate interests that are engaged in primitive accumulation consider vibrant educational institutions as a threat to their exploitative designs. Historically, the autonomous institutions like Universities derive their freedom from sovereign power of the people and not the power of the state as many sections believe. The educational institutions are accountable only to the people and people alone. They have to be free from the stranglehold of the State which is essentially institutionalised force that can never be a source of creativity. The Universities not only should be free from the State but also from market forces and religion. Short sighted market has no interest in the advancement of basic knowledge either in Natural Sciences or Human Sciences. They want the so-called 'knowledge' that can give them quick profits. Understanding the fundamental laws of nature or human behaviour and social relations have no use to the market. They demand that knowledge should subserve their greed and not the larger societal good. Religion is yet another force which depends more on beliefs and not scientific enquiry. It is religious orthodoxy that tortured Galileo and Copernicus for discovering the scientific truth which was considered a threat to the very survival of Religion.

The educational system particularly University system is facing the threats from the State, market and religion. It is this formidable nexus that has thrown the entire education into a deep turmoil. The thinking minds concerned with the truth and future of the human society do react and resist. Youth of every society contributed in shaping the history. Bhagatsingh is one of the shining examples of this phenomenon. The youth endowed with reason, scientific enquiry, human curiosity and, above all, concerned with the welfare of the people do not and cannot keep quiet. They are fired by idealism and imagination. They are engaged in search of alternative ways of life and paths of development. It is such youth who protected and promoted democratic culture in the past and gave rich democratic legacy to the succeeding generations. It is this legacy that is manifest and all pervading in the ongoing struggles in different parts of the country within the institution at one level and peoples' struggles and social movement at another level.

The narratives in this volume hold testimony to the heroic resistance of Indian students. The students sharing social concerns and democratic values are carrying on valiant struggles to defend and promote democratic culture which alone can contribute to larger social transformation.

The narratives present a range of issues that the students are fighting all over the country. The forms, methods, modes of struggles are so diverse, so creative, so imaginative, that they are reassuring that we will be able to contain the rise of fascism. No force can succeed in subverting institutional autonomy and creative urge of the youth of this country. These narratives have stories of success and setbacks; what is important is the struggle itself. In fact democratization of society in essence is more a process and these struggles are a part of that civilizational process. The All India Convention aims at providing or facilitating a dialogue among the students spread over a large country like India. These resistance movements become more energetic and formidable through solidarity. Solidarity by no means Uniformity. It is an attempt to understand, co-operate and mutually reinforce each others' struggles. Independent and isolated struggles have their own strength but their strength may not match the power of fascist forces. A democratic counter power could be built through the bridges between varied struggles. Such a possibility is evident in these narratives. That is the sole purpose of bringing out this volume.

This collection of narratives and its publication is not free from serious limitations. They were written with a short notice and proper editing has not been possible. These may be treated as drafts and outlines of the struggle. It brings out the contours of the resistance and the content needs to be strengthened. It was also not possible to collect all the narratives. These are only samples of the student struggles. We assure the readers that soon we will bring out a properly edited comprehensive volume which will hold mirror to the great, relentless and valiant struggles that the students are carrying on which promise building up of vibrant institutions of higher learning than can in turn contribute to a more humane equitable democratic society in which human beings can live with freedom and dignity - a society in which the youth can realise their full potential.

Editorial Collective

All India Forum for Right to Education

Struggle at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) Against the Appointment of Mr. Gajendra Chauhan

A BVP activists had allegedly thrashed students of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) for inviting the Kabir Kala Manch (KKM) artistes for a performance during August 2013. The programme was to pay homage to the slain anti-superstition activist Dr Narendra Dabholkar. The incident took place despite a police bandobast for the programme. Four FTII students were reportedly injured in the incident. This incident happen much before Narendra Modi led BJP government came to power with a whooping historical win. I was a first year student very new to Pune and was just beginning to understand FTII and it's student politics. This was the first such event of political charge I volunteered. I was not an office bearer then. Ajayan adat , Sriram Raja , Ansar sha , Anwar Shamshudeen were heavily injured after the attack. I was witnessing the whole incident. After that Modi came in power and that started reflecting in the higher educational instituions. One such was at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M), on June 7 2015 "reinstated the recognition of" Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle (APSC), an independent student body whose de-recognition triggered a social media campaign and widespread protests.

The action on APSC came after the HRD Ministry sent a letter to the institute on the APSC's political activities, reportedly after an anonymous complaint claimed that the student body was criticizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government's policies. And the onslaught had already started in other government run or aided cultural institutions like Prasar Bharathi , CBFC ,

NCHR ., BJP s Ideological wing RSS (Rashtriya Swayamseva Sangh) had sketched a clear route map for placing their own people . In this light June 9 th 2015 Mr. Gajendra Chauhan was appointed as the Chairman of the Film and Television Institute of India. FTII though a premier institution run under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting but the Administrative Body is formed under the Societies Act . President of the Society automatically becomes the Chairman of the Institute . The Society was formed after almost eight months vacancy, After Mr. Saeed Mirza had resigned from office. The Chairman not only heads the administrative functioning of the institute but also heads and precedes Academic Council which is also an independently elected body of field experts. This is also to be reshuffled after the new governing councils office.

On June 12th 2015, students Of FTII went on an Indefinite Strike .This was what reported on Media but the truth was we ourselves did not decide or know whether is it a protest or a strike or a indefinite strike. We had conducted a General Body Meeting for which the usual 10 percent of population of students turned up and we by majority voted to go on a strike . Next day we wrote slogans on the walls and boycotted the classes and there was a wild spirit amongst us . Drumbeats and slogans, we locked the doors of Administrative offices, we stopped the Film Appreciation course and requested the participants who have come from outside also to join the protest. The whole institute turned into slogans and graffiti on a single day. National press arrived including the big TV channels of the country of the likes NDTV , CNN – IBN , TIMES . I was actually confused and couldn't make much sense why is it a big news. A small group of students protesting against their newly appointed chairman , how come is it a hot news as my perception of Indian media was they were only interested in which celebrity is dating whom in Bollywood. This was unbelievably overwhelming. Then afterwards what happened was like a dream, a awaken dream. Many students have suffered permanent losses. Not to glorify or romanticize but for a middle class privileged crowd in a elite institution who have been cocooned inside a safe compound where you won't be lynched for eating beef or beaten up for sitting as couple even to miss the classes for 139 days was itself a big deal. It was very easy for any of us in the leadership to loose track and to dwell in the publicity stunts of media but our sanity prevailed majority because of two things, first our innocent spirit not to give up and second love and support of the people outside the institute.

It's been two years now. But still people keep asking how did you guys pull off such a big struggle irrespective of us having lost in technical sense. Actually even I don't know. We learned everything from scratch. As I told earlier TIME

was a big factor. At least to me the Strike was an inevitable consequence of sixty odd years of FTII and Congress. But what RSS – BJP had done to it was last nail on the coffin. In a country where 1000 cinemas are made yearly and what we have imparted as a film culture is really pathetic. Perverse lyrics sung by young children in reality shows are a greatest example of our cultural poverty. That's what I keep wondering what's the culture RSS wants us to preserve?.

Institute was initially setup to train people for Doordarshan and other government run Institutes and also more like a Propaganda wing also for I&B but slowly it diverted from that to being an strong alternative to what is told to be the Bollywood. But Bollywood being a monstrous industry the force was too much to resist and as a government institution the democratic setup allowed students to choose their paths were many became successful in the Mumbai industry. So the complaint of wasting tax payers money is a foolish argument as the revenue paid by ex FTIIians in Bollywood will be at least four times more than what government spends on the training.

No color and the moralistic protest

After few days of night long GBM's and deliberations we developed strategies on how to go about the protest. We had based our camp at Wisdom Tree which is an old Mango Tree which had become a iconic place in FTII because greats like Ritwik Ghatak used to get his students there for lectures after his quota of drinks. And Wisdom Tree was seen as a holy place for few. Our political lessons and never ending talks about cinema and life , Parties , If someone got married amongst us, everything happened under that tree so one might say it's an obvious choice for us to camp there. Press Conferences , TV recordings , Our meetings , GBMs, The Hunger Strike which happened later everything happened under that tree.

We had elected a Core Team and Spokespersons respectively. And we had started our social media campaigning, which had the hash tag of nocolor and we started a page named FTII WISDOM which is still active. The nocolor hash tag became a controversial subject . Already we have been criticized especially by Dalit activists as being Elite and Brahminical as our slogans like ' GHATAK WAS HERE CHAUHAN GO BACK ' and the mockery which we had created out of Chauhan's 'B- GRADE CINEMA '. The nocolor hash tag made it more problematic about our political stand. Because we were denying our protest to be politically driven rather a protest against 'UNFAIR' appointment. So it could be understood as an idea of MERIT in Brahminical sense. Is it all about Mr. Chauhan's morals as an actor. We weren't even uttering the word Hindutuva or

saffornisation till then. We were actually writing slogans like ' Don't Politicize this place ' which later we understood through the course of 139 days that it's all about Politics. The strike for me was actually to politicize the otherwise anarchic and apolitical campus. I personally realized how much it is important those three words of Babasaheb Educate Organise And Agitate.

Fabulous Four Others

As I have explained about our contradiction in terms of Politics per say and not being able to articulate what is the issue actually. The real help came from the enemy's quarters as Ms. Anagha Ghaisas another member elect of the society name called us as Anti – Nationals (though now it's common terminology and it has lost it's charm , back then it was quite potent) and proudly announced her links with RSS and said she had been appointed to cleanse the place. And this is what RSS stands for. M.S. Golwalker writes in his book "We Or Our Nationhood Defined" The foreign races in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing,deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment not even citizen's rights. There is, at least should be, no other course for them to adopt. We are an old nation: let us deal, as old nations ought to and do deal, with the foreign races who have chosen to live in our country." Then our research went deeper to see the profiles of all the members of the society , their prior work and so on. And at the same time parallel support started coming from different student organizations and political parties and also general public. We were branded as LEFT and were being provoked by Congress and Communist parties to protest was the popular narrative in pro Hindutuva and right liberal magazines and platforms. Along with Mr. Chauhan we also added four other people to be removed from the panel. And the government to setup a proper process for electing the members of the society in future and also to declare FTII as Institute of National Importance so that more Autonomy is exercised in terms of at least local administration and academic functioning. The list of people who along with Chauhan we wanted to be replaced were ,Anagha Ghaisas, along with being active member of RSS she had also made several documentary films on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Hindutuva propaganda ; Narendra Pathak, a former president of the Maharashtra ABVP; Shailesh Gupta whose claim to fame is a short movie what he made for Modi propaganda during elections; and Rahul Solapurkar, who is intimately associated with the BJP.

One can ask a question are RSS people banned from holding posts , they aren't a banned organization ? True . But Mr. Narendra Pathak was the one who marched against two of our students claiming them to be Naxals. The Case is still going on in Pune. Rahul Solapurkar sits in a lodge near our institute and deals small rifts between parties and expecting a seat in some election from BJP . Shailesh Gupta film is poisonous for the society. And is it too much to expect to have people who can think meaningfully for a place like FTII .

No Color To No Fear (our Hash Tags Changed)

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry responded to our Letter. They called us for a meeting in Delhi. A ten member panel went which also included Girish Kasaravalli and Resul Pookutty went and as expected it was more of a pacifying stunt by then Minister Arun Jaitley who was sitting in the glorious ruins of Victorian Post colonial hangover as an unclaimed Monarch telling us about the Money what they have and like to spend on FTII and how we are creating a road block. And all the great hospitality was a spoiler in disguise as post strike like a cheap middle class man the I&B Ministry asked us to repay the air tickets what they spent. And after that lots of meeting happened and when I think of those meetings I personally feel now , in a struggle meeting and talking is a different process. Especially for a party like BJP talking to them with sense doesn't work , you need to have Power to defeat them not good manners or oratory skills. The Power of People . The Power of United strength of progressive, spirited forces of students , farmers , Tribals , Dalits , Communists , Ambedkarites , minorities together with a enduring and continuous struggle politically , socially and culturally only can defeat a force like RSS-BJP. But for this understanding to arrive it took a lot of time for me personally and for a community to understand it the process was kick started in 139 days .

Involvement of well meaning alumni

Many people had wondered and some had even accused us of the question Funds ? . Especially for a strike to progress for 139 days one would obviously need resources and most of our support and backbone had been our ex-students and in contrary also it worked because some of them have actually been in the role of pacifiers of the struggle too. So in a struggle especially of a mass nature it's very tough to decide on the support and resources because whether you like it or not obligation is one factor which one should very carefully and critically analyze and decide. Well meaning is for both for the government and for us. So the struggle after a point when we understood the word saffronisaation of education and the policies like WTO-GATS agreement and other nuanced but

out rightly anti-people/anti-student policies of the government became less about the appointment but more about the country.

March To Delhi And Other Protests

After the 50th day and when one official and one unofficial backdoor negotiation had failed and visit of Rahul Gandhi had made it more of a Ego battle for BJP we took the struggle outside the campus. We organized marches and other student/ political/social organizations in different parts of the country had also organized Press Conferences, Protest Marches, Solidarity Strikes., FTII had already become a National Issue. Parliamentarians were approached to rise up issue in the Monsoon session. We went outside Pune for the first time. Delhi. Jantar Mantar which had become a Central Camp of several protests became our Camp too. Almost entire institute took a train to Delhi . And JNU students and the Union were of great support to provide us with accommodation and our march to Parliament house from Jantar Mantar was a huge success. Thousand odd people from Delhi University and it's colleges , Various Political and Cultural groups, Student Unions , Activists , Artists , Common Public and Media People attended in huge numbers.

The gherao and mid-night arrest

Delhi was successful where even The Chief Minister MR. Arvind Kejariwal invited us to his office and offered unconditional support for our struggle. But the government did not even wink. They were just pacifying us telling we will appoint a Vice – Chairman and make Mr. Chauhan powerless and pump in more money and we removed 3 out of 5 and all sorts of funny ideas where one feels what is this EGO battle all about ? The government just don't want to loose in front of 200 odd powerless students sorry hooligans and immoral bastards according to them. And they were wearing us out with various arm twisting tactics. Police force was employed in Campus permanently. And some random people(RSS men which got to know later) would roam around the nearby areas of institute , Pune local crowd was confused by some pro – Hindutuva media as they were continuously promoting a negative image. And People like Arnab Goswami were also interested only in shaming Chauhan but his pro – Hindutuva mindset was apparent when he cornered us in some shows asking about morality and not finishing the course on time and tax payers money being wasted on us.

In the line of tactics what government was following th issue of 2008 batch overstaying in campus became their next target as we could have be portrayed easily as lumpens who are just wasting time and money of government resources. We had hold, The then Director of the institute Mr. Prashanth

Pathrabe , responsible which turned to be a ' gherao ' and eventually he was left to go where he confessed that it was because of government pressure he had to issue notices to the students of 2008 batch. The incident turned to be ugly and a game changer.. We were supposed to end the strike because frankly we were exhausted by all means. And too many things were at risk and we were struggling each single day for resources and energy. But the mid – night arrest by police against shifted the attention of public and media and we had also got a new rage to fight without compromise or giving up.

100 DAYS

Struggle became 100 days old. FTII was always famous for strikes but his was unprecedented and the government still have even stepped back bit. And for us we actually did not even realize how 100 days have gone under the inglorious/ glorious wisdom tree. Morally we have already won the struggle for putting up a valiant and militant battle against the all mighty and notorious RSS-BJP government and the ruthless bureaucrats were sweating out their overtime just to think how to destroy our spirit and later maybe our careers (that we have to wait and see!). 100 days was marked with an evening of songs of resistance , speeches by some senior activists on fascism becoming a reality and how to take the struggle forward.

Hunger strike

The community was loosing the strength and hope. We were becoming dependent on calamities and unforced error by government for our progress. The last weapon we had in our hand with non – violent approach was hunger strike and we exercised it. Started with three students and lot of students across batches sat according to their own willingness and strength. One of my batch mates named Himanshu Shekar sat for 18 days which might have shooked the government a bit they called for a fresh round of meetings which was nothing but a sham where they fed us with 'dhokla' in one hand and 'dhoka' in other hand.

The End .. Less 139 days of pregnant madness named freedom and hope. On October 28th 2015 we went back to classes where we achieved nothing from the state but everything from the people.

Harishankar Nachimuthu
FTII, Pune

The Struggles of Ambedkar-Periyar Study Circle-IIT Madras, Tamil Nadu

IIT-M, which was established in the year 1959, has always been under the clutches of Brahminical forces. Tamil Nadu, which is home for the progressive Dravidian movements, was not able to wield much influence inside IIT-M which has been kind of an 'exclusive' club of the elite. Only by 90s or later students and faculties from oppressed caste / class started entering the campus, though not in significant numbers. Some of the liberal minded students as well as staff members have attempted in the past to fight against the Brahminical hegemony, but in vain. Only in the year 2014 a decisive step was taken towards this direction, when a set of like-minded students decided to organize themselves under the banner of Ambedkar-Periyar Study Circle.

Modus operandi of Hindutva forces inside IIT-M campus and the formation of APSC

Pro-Hindutva regressive forces, who were operating inside the campus for a very long time, were utilizing all facilities of the institute freely to propagate their ideology. They were allowed to organize a number of events inside the campus under various names and banners; extra-mural lectures *(which are funded out of the fee paid by the students)*, departmental lectures, study circle activities etc. were organized, for which some of the core members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh were invited to speak; sometimes, even bhajans were organized!.

Just to give you a sample to taste, even before BJP announced Narendra Modi as its Prime Ministerial candidate in September 2013, pro-Hindutva forces were

all set to take up the election campaigning inside the campus. Core members of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its supporters including Aravindan Neelakantan, Kiran Bedi, S. Gurumurthy were invited for the lectures in a span of five months; S. Gurumurthy who was introduced to the gathering as economist and journalist was openly campaigning for the BJP. When this was happening, some progressive elements inside the campus brought forth various issues affecting not just the students of IIT-M, but also the public at large. They were organizing protests, meetings and discussions on issues including tuition fee hike, mess issue, genocide at Eelam, establishing nuclear plant at Kudankulam against the wishes of people, etc. After witnessing the mode of operation of the Hindutva forces, students who were part of the above campaigns decided to organize themselves and form a study circle with an aim to take the fascist forces head-on. When there were discussions to decide a name for the study circle, there were no second thoughts from anyone in using the names of legends Dr. Ambedkar and Periyar, who led an uncompromised struggle on-the-ground against Brahminical hegemony. As expected, the administration was not receptive to the names of Ambedkar and Periyar, but students were not ready to compromise. Finally, Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle (APSC) was officially born on April 14, 2014. Its objectives are as to initiate debates and discussion within the academic community at IIT Madras on social, economic, political and cultural issues which affects the public at large. To promote the thoughts and ideas of Ambedkar, Periyar and other progressive social thinkers and reformers to promote scientific temper and scientific outlook for the people.

On the year of its inception

APSC jumped into action immediately after its formation; Hall meets and movie screenings were organized, pamphlets were distributed among students, to ignite debates on various anti-people issues including Coal Bed Methane project, GM crops, labour law reform - Factory Disputes Act 1947 (Amendment), politics of Sanskrit language imposition in India, MHRD's overt attempt to have separate vegetarian mess halls in IITs and IIMs, IITM administration's move to replace the name board of the faculties and laboratories with Sanskritized Hindi etc. APSC also organized memorial lectures on birthdays of Bhagat Singh (titled, 'Understanding Bhagat Singh') and Ambedkar (titled, 'Contemporary Relevance of Dr. Ambedkar'). All these campaigns were taking the sangh's agenda of 'Hindu-Hindi-Hindurashtra(India)' head-on, and were exposing the failure of neo-liberal policies.

Ban of APSC

Hindu fanatics inside the campus, who never tolerated even a murmur against them, were totally bewildered by the bold campaigns undertaken by APSC and the support it was able to garner from the student community. Unfortunately to their dismay, this was officially not feudal regime; otherwise it would have been easy for them to 'finish-off' APSC and its supporters. Constrained by this, and unable to face APSC directly on-the-ground, RSS-inclined students decided to write an anonymous letter to the MHRD complaining against the activities of APSC. As expected, MHRD took-up this matter 'on war-footing' and shot a letter to IIT-M administration immediately, recommending it to derecognize APSC. On receipt of this letter, IITM administration derecognized the study circle on May 5, 2015. The MHRD letter signed by Under Secretary to the Government of India, had enclosed a copy of the anonymous letter, which claimed that "APSC is creating hatred against honourable prime minister and Hindus and trying to de-align the students belonging to Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste and trying to make them to protest against MHRD and Central government." APSC exposed this injustice in its Facebook page, which the print media picked up and reported in its edition on May 29, 2017; Times of India ran a detailed story on its first-page. On hearing this, people from all over India vehemently opposed this ban; lots of protests were organized by political parties, student organizations, academicians, intellectuals and working class masses against this ban.

To its defence, institute's official media body – The Fifth Estate – was spreading lies and giving false narratives; IIT-M's elected students' body – Students Legislative Council (SLC) sided with the administration and conducted a survey as to "Do you think the APSC should be allowed to continue as a recognised body, pending BoS meeting?". IIT-M administration, trying to hide its Hindutva face, was defending its move stating that APSC 'violated' the institute's student body guidelines; but the fact is that such guidelines never existed! . As admin's hypocrisy was exposed, it was forced to re-recogonize APSC. APSC shook the IITM status-quo primarily because of the political line it used i.e., oppose Hindu-Brahminical fascism and oppose re-colonisation. Arundhati Roy has correctly pointed this out as follows: "They (APSC) have made the connection between Corporate Globalization and the perpetuation of caste". Brahminical fascism and re-colonization are two sides of the same coin; Hindu brahminical fascism diverts peoples' attention and prevents them from organizing themselves to oppose the relentless imperialistic exploitation.

Struggle continues..

As all the efforts to ban APSC failed miserably, the frustrated administration took all measures to curb the activities of the student bodies by introducing new restrictions in the form of guidelines, standard operating procedures etc. Recently, the administration even banned distribution of pamphlets inside the campus, based on a ridiculous argument that 'pamphlets are not environmental friendly and will lead to death of deer inside campus'. It was obvious that their target was APSC. APSC continued its activities inside the campus under severely restricted conditions. Still, a number of lectures, discussions and protests were organized to expose cow politics, the politics behind imposition of Sanskrit / Hindi, and how these serve as perfect tool for the RSS to achieve its agenda of building a 'Hindu Rashtra'. A number lectures were organized: Speakers invited include Prof. Anand Teltumbde, Prof. Muruganandam, Prof. Ram Puniyani, Prof. Shamsul Islam, and Comrade Anaimuthu. When the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula took place, APSC organized a protest immediately inside the campus; students and staff participated in large numbers in these protest.

APSC also took lead in organizing and mobilising students against commercialization of education. When National Educational Policy-2016 was introduced, APSC was one of the first student bodies to analyse and exposed its pro-corporate and pro-Hindutva nature. What was predicted has come true now, as government started implementing the recommendations mentioned in the NEP one by one. APSC invited AIFRTE presidium members to give talk on New Education Policy in IITM. Prof. Anil Sadgopal delivered the lecture on November 2015 under the title "Recolonization of India: Circle is closing Faster through New-Education Policy dictated by WTO-GATS!" and Mr. Ramesh Patnaik gave the talk on September 2016 on *"National Education Policy (NEP) 2016; Neo-Macaulay + Neo-Manu dharma."* In addition, APSC joined hands with various organizations in their movements against Hindutva and commercialization of education; All India resistance camp against committing Higher education to WTO-GATS by AIFRTE, Karnataka Vidyarthi Sanghatane(KVS) – Bangalore, Joint Action Committee (JAC) – Mumbai, Revolutionary Student Youth Front (RSYF) – Tamil Nadu, and Dravidar Kazhagam – Tamil Nadu, are to name a few.

Derecognition of APSC turned out to be a first and a major blow to RSS/BJP camp after Modi came to power; it tried to ban one APSC – but there are a number of APSCs in many campuses all over India now. The ideologies of Dr.

Ambedkar and Periyar have been taken into the door-steps of colleges and are major weapons against Brahminical fascism. Again, when it the cattle-trade ban was imposed by the Modi-regime in May this year, IIT-M campus was in the fore-front in opposing and exposing it. It is not an exaggeration to state that APSC's tireless and continued effort in politicization of fellow students inside the campus was one of the reasons for this.

APSC has learnt from its experience in the past three years that a student organization can't succeed in its struggle without politicisation of fellow students; it is one of the essential pre-requisites for any student organization to take its campaign to next level. Also, whenever a student organization takes-up an issue, it should always try to link it with a problem which can find resonance with common people. This is the key to gain the support of the working masses. APSC vows to continue its struggle by joining hands with fellow students' organizations all over India!

- Ambedkar-Periyar Study Circle
IIT Madras, Tamil Nadu

#OccupyUGC – A Movement to Save Education as a Right for All!

Over the last few weeks, the country has seen one of the largest student uprisings in its recent history. UGC's decision to scrap the non - NET scholarship, as declared on 20thOctober 2015, after a UGC meeting dated October 7, 2015, served as a tipping point for the simmering unrest within thestudent community, which has long been struggling under the assault of rising tuition fees and cost of education, reckless semesterization program at undergraduate level and deteriorating quality of public higher education due to fund cuts and a plethora of market oriented/vocational courses taking advantage of job insecurity. The student community erupted in anger, bursting into massive protests in various universities all over the country. In Delhi, UGC office was stormed by hundreds of protesting students, who occupied space outside - chanting slogans, singing songs, clashing with the police (thepolice hadlathi charged students, leaving several injured and at least five hospitalized) and refusing to budge/vacate until their demands were met. Students across various colleges and universities resonated with the movement within a matter of hours and a broader solidarity against fund cuts has been forged among the agitating students of Jamia Millia Islamia, North Eastern Hill University, Jadavpur university, Ambedkar University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, South Asian University, Delhi University, University of Hyderabad, Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi VishwaVidyalaya-Wardha, ,Gujarat central university, Haryana central university and later students acrossthe country have joined them.

Under the Non-NET fellowship, UGC has been providing a monthly sum of Rs. 5000 and Rs. 8000 to MPhil and PhD scholars respectively. Not indexed

to inflation, this amount has been proving too small to cover ever increasing cost of education and research/for a comfortable and dignified life as a research scholar, and in any case, students of all state universities are outside the ambit of its benefits. The decision of the committee (that was instituted by the UGC in February 2015, ironically, to look into the enhancement of the non-NET) to scrap the scholarship was under the pretext that its outreach was limited to central university research students. As a result the first delegation of protesting students raised the demand that the scholarship be reinstated unconditionally, its amount must be enhanced and its outreach must be expanded to cover state universities as well. In response the UGC agreed that the scholarship will be continued in its present form, but by a sleight of hand, instituted a review committee that will decide the criteria (merit or income cap) through which it will now be given only to selected students across central and state university researchers.

Over 800 student protestersmarched to the Ministry for Human Resource Development rejecting the additional criteria on 5thNovember, denouncing it as an exclusionary measure. Smriti Irani, was forced to meet the students outside the MHRD and merely reiterated what the UGC had already told the students. She also admitted/said that there is no student representative within he review committee and though students could send in depositions regarding what sort of criteria they would prefer, no student will be a part of the committee. Students decided to present the review committee with a mass deposition rejecting any additional criteria on the 18thof November. The students rally wasn't entertained by the MHRD and stopped way before it reached the ministry gates. Police force was again unleashed on the students and the students were forcefully removed from the site and detained at the Parliament Police station. Students were beaten up, pushed, groped and clothes of many female students were torn during the same. The police behaviorhas gotten worse with time and many a times male police officials have openly assaulted female students.

It is acknowledged that, despite the non-NET being a meagre amount in view of the skyrocketing inflation in the country, it serves as a lifeline to a large mass of students from Dalit, Adivasi, backwardclasses, minoritiesand female students seeking self dependence. In a country where structural oppression based on class, caste and gender has kept large sections of the people historically deprived and away from access to education, and education is promised as an opportunity to break free from these structural inequalities, then/ and it is criminal to deprive these sections of our society of education. In any case only 4.5% of Indian students reach higher education and even fewer continue into research. If the Government withdraws its support to these students in their middle twenties

they will have little option than to look at alternative ways of self-sustenance or drop-out. This will also reflect in the research questions that will be raised within universities and as the student community in the university gets elite so will its area of research.This is a clear indication of the danger of the Central Government withdrawing from its responsibility of providing accessible higher education to all sections of society, especially Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs, religious minorities and women. More than 40 years after the initial recommendation in National Policy of Education (NPE 1968) and reaffirmation in NPE 1986 (amended in 1990), there is still no political will to raise educational spending to minimum 6% of GDP.

This move by the UGC needs to be understood in the context of India's larger submission to WTO diktats. It is yet another move towards marketization and privatization of higher education in the country. Bending under the World Bank's insistence to reduce fiscal deficit, Indian government has already been cutting funding and subsidy to many important sectors in the economy. Higher education is yet another field which the government is now intent to open up to market forces. With more and more private universities being encouraged to set shop in the country, the government has also been repeatedly announcing and glorifying the prospective entry of foreign universities in India's higher education sector. December 2015 will mark the WTO-GATS Conference wherein the Government of India is all set to allow 160 member countries of WTO to establish universities in India as commercial ventures. With this, the people's right to education will be completely dismantled as the government will then be bound to protect the interests of foreign and domestic corporate houses that pursue profits in the sector. To create a "level playing field" for these profit making entities, the government will need to dismantle all subsidies and support to public universities, so that these private and foreign entities can "compete" with public universities in the market. It is in preparation for this commitment to the WTO that the government took this move to scrap the non-NET scholarship. Thus we need to understand this as a deliberate attempt to sabotage public universities in preparation for the planned privatization and marketization of higher education of India. There is an uncanny similarity between the way the demise of public health care one cannot help but observe the mushrooming of Max and Fortis hospitals while most of the populace requires AIIMS. Both of these are social sectors and privatizationin these sectors inevitably means the continuation and exacerbation of inequality in our country.

Having understood the design of the Government the students have waged this larger struggle for the right to education demanding increase in the scholarship

amount, indexing it to inflation, dissociating it from any notion of "merit", bringing all universities (including state universities) in the ambit of this scholarship, and most importantly to put a complete halt to the process of privatization and marketization of higher education in the country. #Occupy UGC has been able to reach the student struggles that had been already happening and been able to give a call for unifying these struggles across the country. In line with this, the coordination committee of the OccupyUGC movement (a committee of representatives from various colleges, universities and student organizations which has been leading the movement) has declared a national rally for 'Dilli Chalo' on the 9thof December against ceding education as a tradeable service in the upcoming Nairobi round at WTO. Thousands of students would be marching to the Parliament on the 9thto register their protest against this move to auction out their right to education to private players.

Ankita

(Source:Aaghaaz students magazine, Issue III, December 2015-2016.)

My Birth is My Fatal Accident: Rohith Vemula

Rohith Vemula, a Dalit PhD candidate at University of Hyderabad had been suspended along with four others after a complaint by the local unit of the Akhil Bharatatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the BJP. They suspended for raising issues under the banner of the Ambedkar Students Association (ASA).The ABVP's complaints against the ASA was taken up by union minister Bandaru Dattatreya who forwarded them to the then HRD minister Smriti Irani who asked the university administration to look into them. They set up a tent on the campus and began a relay hunger strike. On January 17, 2016, Vemula committed suicide with a banner of the ASA and left behind a searing note talking of unfinished dreams and how he felt his "birth was his fatal accident".

Good morning,

I would not be around when you read this letter. Don't get angry on me. I know some of you truly cared for me, loved me and treated me very well. I have no complaints on anyone. It was always with myself I had problems. I feel a growing gap between my soul and my body. And I have become a monster. I always wanted to be a writer. A writer of science, like Carl Sagan. At last, this is the only letter I am getting to write.

I always wanted to be a writer. A writer of science, like Carl Sagan.

I loved Science, Stars, Nature, but then I loved people without knowing that people have long since divorced from nature. Our

feelings are second handed. Our love is constructed. Our beliefs colored. Our originality valid through artificial art. It has become truly difficult to love without getting hurt.

The value of a man was reduced to his immediate identity and nearest possibility. To a vote. To a number. To a thing. Never was a man treated as a mind. As a glorious thing made up of star dust. In every field, in studies, in streets, in politics, and in dying and living.

I am writing this kind of letter for the first time. My first time of a final letter. Forgive me if I fail to make sense.

My birth is my fatal accident. I can never recover from my childhood loneliness. The unappreciated child from my past.

May be I was wrong, all the while, in understanding world. In understanding love, pain, life, death. There was no urgency. But I always was rushing. Desperate to start a life. All the while, some people, for them, life itself is curse. My birth is my fatal accident. I can never recover from my childhood loneliness. The unappreciated child from my past.

I am not hurt at this moment. I am not sad. I am just empty. Unconcerned about myself. That's pathetic. And that's why I am doing this.

People may dub me as a coward. And selfish, or stupid once I am gone. I am not bothered about what I am called. I don't believe in after-death stories, ghosts, or spirits. If there is anything at all I believe, I believe that I can travel to the stars. And know about the other worlds.

If you, who is reading this letter can do anything for me, I have to get 7 months of my fellowship, one lakh and seventy five thousand rupees. Please see to it that my family is paid that. I have to give some 40 thousand to Ramji. He never asked them back. But please pay that to him from that.

Let my funeral be silent and smooth. Behave like I just appeared and gone. Do not shed tears for me. Know that I am happy dead than being alive.

"From shadows to the stars."

Uma anna, sorry for using your room for this thing.

To ASA family, sorry for disappointing all of you. You loved me very much. I wish all the very best for the future.

For one last time,

Jai Bheem

I forgot to write the formalities. No one is responsible for my this act of killing myself.

No one has instigated me, whether by their acts or by their words to this act.

This is my decision and I am the only one responsible for this.

Do not trouble my friends and enemies on this after I am gone.

- Rohith Vemula

University of Hyderabad

We are Against Institutional Violence

Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union President Kanhaiya Kumar gave a speech in JNU after he was released from judicial custody on being granted a six month interim bail by the Delhi High Court.

They are the ones who burnt the Tricolour. They are followers of Savarkar who apologised to the British. They are the ones who, in Haryana, have changed the name of one airport. There was one airport named after Bhagat Singh. The Khattar government has now named it after one Sanghi (a person associated with the RSS). What I mean to say is that we don't need the certificate of patriotism from the RSS. We don't need a nationalist certificate from the RSS. We belong to this country. We love this country. We fight for the 80 per cent of the poor population of this country. For us, this is nation worship. We have full faith in Babasahab (Ambedkar). We have full faith in the Constitution of India. We want to say this very forcefully that if anyone tries to challenge the Constitution, be it the Sanghis, we will not tolerate.We have faith in the Constitution. But we don't have faith in the Constitution that is taught in Jhandewalan (RSS headquarters in Delhi) and Nagpur. We don't have faith in Manusmriti, we don't have faith in the caste system in this country.

The Constitution and Babasahab Ambedkar talk about corrective measures. The same Babasahab Ambedkar talks about abolishing capital punishment. The same Babasahab Ambedkar talks about freedom of expression. And we want to uphold the Constitution, we want to uphold our right. But it's shameful

and sad that the ABVP, in association with their media friends, is running an orchestrated campaign. Yesterday, the ABVP joint secretary said that we fight for fellowships. How ridiculous it sounds! Their government, Madam ManuSmriti Irani is ending fellowship and they accuse us of fighting for fellowships. Their government has reduced the higher education budget by 17 per cent. Our hostel has not been built for the past four years, there is no Wi-fi. BHEL gave us one bus but the administration has no money for oil. And ABVP people stand like Dev Anand claiming that they will get hostels built, they will get Wi-fi and they will get fellowships.

They will be exposed if there is a debate on the basic issues in this country. We are proud of being JNU-ites because we discuss and debate the basic issues concerning this country. We raise issues related to the dignity of women, Dalits, tribals and minorities in this country. And so, their Swamy (Subramanian Swamy) says that jihadis live in JNU, that JNU students spread violence. On behalf of JNU, I want to challenge RSS ideologues. Call us and hold a debate. We want to debate the concept of violence. We want to raise questions about the frenzied ABVP's slogans, their slogan that they will do tilak with blood and aarti with bullets. Whose blood do they want to spill? They aligned with the British and fired bullets on the freedom fighters of this country. They fired bullets when poor people demanded bread; they fired bullets when people dying of hunger talked about their rights; they have fired bullets on Muslims; they have fired bullets on women when they demand equal rights. They say that five fingers are not equal. They advocate that women should emulate Sita and give agnipariksha. There is democracy in this country, and democracy gives equal rights to all - be it a student, a worker, the poor or the rich, Ambani or Adani. And when we talk about equal rights of women, they accuse us of destroying Indian culture. We want to destroy the culture of exploitation, the culture of caste, the culture of Manuwad and Brahminism. Till now, the definition of culture has not been resolved. They have a problem when people of this country talk about democracy, when they give blue salute along with red salute, when people talk about Ambedkar along with Marx, when people talk about Asfaqulla Khan (the freedom fighter). They can't tolerate. It is their conspiracy. They were British stooges. I dare them to file a defamation case against me. I say that the RSS's history is of siding with the British. These traitors today are distributing certificates of nationalism.

Check my mobile phone, friends. Dirty abuses are being hurled at my mother and sister. Which Mother India are you talking about? If my mother is not part of your Mother India, your concept of Mother India is not acceptable to me. My

mother is an Anganwadi sewika, my family runs with the Rs 3,000 she earns and they are abusing her. I'm ashamed that in this country, the mothers of the poor, Dalit farmers are not part of Mother India. I will hail the mothers of this country, I will hail the fathers of this country, I will hail the mothers and sisters of this country, I will hail the poor farmers, Dalits, tribals and labourers. I will tell them that if they have courage, then say ' Inquilab zindabad', say 'Bhagat Singh zindabad', say 'Sukhdev zindabad', say 'Asfaqulla Khan zindabad', say 'Babasahab Ambedkar zindabad'. Only then will I believe that you have faith in this country.

They are enacting the drama of celebrating Ambedkar's 125th birth anniversary. If they have courage, they should raise the issues Ambedkar raised. Caste system is one of the biggest problems in this country. Talk about caste system, bring reservation in every sector, bring reservation in the private sector. Raise these questions, then I will believe that you have faith in this country. This nation had never been yours and will never be yours. A nation is made by its people and if there is no place for hungry and poor people in your idea of the nation, then it is no nation.

Yesterday, I said in one TV debate that we are in difficult times. The way fascism is coming in the country, even the media would not be spared. The media would be provided with written scripts from the RSS office, just as written scripts came from the Congress office during the Emergency.

Some media friends told me that JNU runs on taxpayers' money, on subsidy. Yes, it is right that JNU runs on subsidy. But I want to raise the question: what are universities for? Universities are there for critical analysis of the society's collective conscience. Critical analysis should be promoted. If universities fail in their duty, there would be no nation. If people are not part of a nation, it will turn into a grazing ground for the rich, for exploitation and looting. If we don't assimilate people's culture, beliefs and rights, a nation would not be formed. We stand firmly with the country, we stand for the dreams of Bhagat Singh and Babasahab Ambedkar. We stand for equal rights. We stand for the right to live. Rohith (Vemula) had to lose his life to stand for these rights. But we want to tell these Sanghis - "shame on your government". We challenge the central government - we will not allow in JNU whatever it did in the case of Rohith. Rohith will not lose his life here. We will not forget Rohith's sacrifice. We will stand for freedom of expression. Leave aside Pakistan and Bangladesh, we call for unity of the poor and the toiling masses of the world. We hail the humanity of this world, we hail the humanity of India.

We have identified those who are against humanity. This is the biggest issue before us today. We have identified that face of casteism, the face of Manuwad, the face of the nexus between Brahminism and capitalism. And we have to expose these faces. We have to usher in real freedom, and that freedom will come through the Constitution, through Parliament. And we will achieve it. I want to appeal to you friends that despite all the differences, we have to safeguard this freedom of expression, we have to safeguard our Constitution, we have to safeguard the unity and integrity of this country. For this, we have to remain united and fight the forces trying to divide our country, the forces that give shelter to terrorists.

One last question before I end my speech. Who is Kasab? Who is Afzal Guru? Who are these people, who are in a state to wrap bombs around their body and kill? If these questions are not raised in universities, the existence of universities becomes pointless. If we don't define justice, if we don't define violence and how we see violence? Violence is not only about killing somebody with a gun. There is violence when the JNU administration denies the constitutional rights guaranteed to Dalits. This is institutional violence. They talk about justice. Who will decide what justice is? Brahminism did not allow Dalits to enter temples. The British did not allow dogs and Indians to enter restaurants. That was justice then. We challenged that justice and today we challenge the justice of the ABVP and the RSS because their justice does not accommodate justice for us. If their justice doesn't accommodate justice for us, we will not accept their justice and this freedom. We will accept this freedom when every person gets his constitutional right. We will accept justice when there is equal rights for all.

Friends, the situation is very serious. Under no circumstances does the JNUSU (the JNU students' union) support any violence, any terrorist, any terror incident and any anti-India activity. I want to reiterate that the JNUSU strongly condemns slogans of "Pakistan zindabad" raised by some unidentified people. I want to share one thing with you, friends. It is a question related to the JNU administration and the ABVP. Thousands of things take place on this JNU campus. Listen carefully to the slogans being raised by the ABVP now. They are calling us 'communist dogs'. They are calling us 'Afzal Guru's dogs'. They are calling us 'children of jihadis'. If the Constitution gives us the right to be citizens, then is it not an attack on our constitutional right when they call our parents dogs? We want to ask this question to the ABVP and the JNU administration. We want to ask the JNU administration for whom, with whom and on what basis it works. It is now clear that the JNU administration first gives permission and then withdraws it on receiving a call from Nagpur. This thing of first giving permission and

then withdrawing, it has intensified. First, they will announce fellowship and then tell that it has been withdrawn. This is the RSS and ABVP pattern with which they want to run this country. We want to ask the JNU administration. Permission (for the February 9 programme where eventually the anti-India slogans were shouted) was granted despite the fact that posters had been put up and pamphlets distributed. When it gave permission, on whose directive was it withdrawn? We want to ask this to the JNU administration.

At the same time, understand the truth of these (ABVP) people. Don't hate them. I feel sad for them. They are jumping today because they feel that the way they got Gajendra Chauhan (in the FTII), they would get people like him in every institution. They feel that with people like Chauhan everywhere, they would get jobs. Once they get jobs, they will forget nation worship and Bharat Mata. What to tell of the Tricolour, which they have never respected? They will also forget the saffron flag. I want to know what kind of nation worship they are talking about? If an owner doesn't behave properly with his employees, if a farmer doesn't do justice with his workers, if a highly paid CEO of a media house doesn't behave properly with the meagrely paid reporters, then what is this nation worship?. Their nation worship ends with an India-Pakistan cricket match. After that when they go out on the road, they misbehave with the person selling bananas. When the person selling bananas tells them that a dozen comes for Rs 40, they abuse him and accuse him of looting customers. They demand a dozen for Rs 30. The day the person selling bananas turns and tells them that you are the real looters, they will term the poor fellow anti-national. Nation worship begins and ends with wealth and facilities. I know a number of ABVP people and I ask them whether the fervour of nationalism moves them? They tell me: "What to do, brother, this government is for five years and two years are already over. Three years' talktime is left and whatever has to be done, should be done in this period." But I ask them what will happen if, tomorrow, one of their own members, who is going around in trains checking for beef, holds them by the collar and accuses them of being anti-national since they are from JNU? They could be lynched. I ask them whether they realise this danger?. They tell me that they realise this danger and so are opposing #JNUShutdown (a Twitter hashtag). First, they build an atmosphere against JNU and, then, oppose it when they realise that ultimately they have to live in JNU only. This is why I want to tell all JNU-ites that elections are coming in March. The ABVP people will seek your votes with the "Om" flag. Ask them: "We are jihadis, we are terrorists, we are anti-nationals and by taking our votes, will they also become anti-national?" Do ask them these questions. I know when you ask them these questions, they will tell you, "not you but a few people are anti-nationals". Then ask them, "why

did they not tell this in the media then"? Ask them why their vice-chancellor and registrar too did not tell then?. Tell them that those few people too are saying that they did not raise slogans of "Pakistan zindabad", nor did they support terrorism. Those few people are asking why at first permission was granted and then withdrawn and this is an attack on their democratic right? These few people are saying that if somewhere a democratic struggle is being fought, they will stand for it.They will never understand this. But the people, who have gathered here on short notice, understand the issue. They will go around the campus and tell the students that the ABVP is not only breaking this country but also JNU and we will not allow this to happen.

Long live JNU. JNU will continue to actively participate in all democratic struggles taking place across the country, continue to strengthen the voice of democracy, the voice of freedom and freedom of expression. We will struggle and win and defeat the traitors of this country. With these words, I thank you all and appeal for unity.

Jai Bhim, Lal Salaam.

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Turning in to Saffron Concentration campus

Pondicherry University 'banned' a student magazine titled Widerstand (meaning Resistance in German) following protests by BJP and ABVP members who claimed the content was 'anti-national' in nature. The magazine claims to stand in solidarity with student movements across the country, and resists fascism in any form. With articles titled 'Turning into saffron concentration camps', '#Occupy UGC', 'Era of Indian resistance', 'The country without free speech', 'The diary of a protester', and an entire page dedicated to 'victims of institutional murders', including HCU student Rohith Vemula, in the last year; it is no wonder that BJP and ABVP members burnt copies of the magazine. Here we reproduce an article titled "Turning in to Saffron Concentration campus" from the magazine.

In the recent times, Hyderabad Central University has turned into the epicenter of student's revolution throughout the country following the suicide of a Dalit student Rohith Vemula. NDA government at the Center is openly advocating its anti-educational policies and saffronisation of the Indian education system. The clash between the radical Saffronising policies of the RSS and the students who would eventually stand up to it was inevitable. The institutional murder of the Dalit student Rohith sparked off the rage among the students and spread as fire in the entire country in form of protests against MHRD and the Union Government. BJP's student wing has been an instrument of atrocities and violence against the Dalits and suppressed community students and teachers in all over the country. The open act of such elements across the educational

institutions in India is a matter of grave concern and questions the autonomy of the Universities and concerns the educational environment for the bright young people of the country. The political leaders should not forget that it was the students' revolution that overthrew Indira Gandhi during and after the emergency. If "Indira is India" was thrashed at that time, nothing welcoming can be expected to be done to the MHRD minister Smriti Irani for the inefficient and blood sucking policies to-wards the education system. Who was Rohith? A scholar? A Dalit? Or something else? In his note he blamed no one but the circumstances of his action were not a mystery. He was the victim of atrocious actions of the University and the MHRD. His suicide is a fact but the institutional murder is the realty. The MHRD, Labour and Employment Minister Bandaru Dattatreya, local BJP MLC S. Ramachandra Rao, together declared openly that they have nothing to do with this incident within the 24 hours of his 'Murder'. Who asked them to give statements and clarifications if they had nothing to do with the whole incident? The explanations by the 'Honorable' dignitaries made the conspiracy open and also made it clear that something was fishy enough to stink. And yes the reek of this conspiracy spread like wildfire, not only among the students of various educational institutions in India, but also outside of India.

People watching television at prime time were intelligent enough to see that the actions taken by the BJP leaders in the whole incident was not appropriate. Meanwhile, the local police had filed a case against the Vice Chancellor of Hyderabad Central University, Union Minister of state Bandaru Dattatreya and two other leaders. The Ministry of Human Resources and Development has also appointed a two member committee to investigate the whole case. Rohith Vemula was an activist of 'Ambedkar Students Association' which has emerged as an arch rival to the BJP supported students association ABVP. It was unacceptable to the ABVP that the Dalit students' association of Hyderabad Central University strongly opposed the hanging of Yakub Memon because it seemed as a threat to the BJP-RSS agenda. The pro-test demanding the screening of Naklu Sahni's documentary film "Muzaffar nagar Baki Hai" was not tolerated by the right wing party. In August 2015, in a false accusations and complaints of assault, ABVP wanted to throw Rohith and other ASA members out of the University. Although, the first report of the board pleaded not guilty to the charges of assault levied against Rohith by ABVP leader Sushil Sharma and others, but it led to his suspension for one month. While the former Vice Chancellor, considering the appeals from Dalit students, abandoned the suspension and ordered a second in vestigation committee to probe into the matter. It should be noted that ABVP leader Sushil Kumar Sharma had documented a case for his safety fabricating a

false allegation of assault against Dalit students. The registrar of the university in his affidavit to the court admitted that all Dalit student are innocent in this whole episode. ABVP frustrated of its empty blows dictated a complaint letter to the Ministry of Human Resource Development by contacting a central minister Bandaru Dattatreya. The complaints against the removal of the corrupt and autocratic Chancellor of the Pondicherry University fell into the deaf ears of MHRD but the Ministry showed remarkable interest in this case and wrote five letters to Hyderabad Central University asking them to take the measure to resolve the complaints by Minister of State Bandaru Dattatreya. The local BJP MLC Ramachandra Rao, also entered the scene with his own vested interests.

Soon after joining as the VC, Prof. Rao, through his Executive Council Sub-Committee recommended the restoration of the suspension penalty on Rohith including four other Dalit students. Making it even harder for them, their scholarship was also withheld. These five Dalit students approached all possible authorities seeking justice but nowhere did they find any ray of hope. And it was then inside the tent out at the University gate on the 10th day, January 16th, shocked and traumatized from the incident, Rohith Vemula committed suicide. When the news of Dalit student Ro-hith Vemula's suicide spread like a fire on the social media platforms students of various universities had taken the streets protesting against the atrocities on the downtrodden Dalit students. Protest began from Hyderabad universities and spread to Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune, Chennai, Pondicherry, Allahabad, Varanasi, Lucknow etc. In defense of the Ministry, Union Minister Smriti Irani tried to frame Dalit faculties of the University but was completely put to shame when the faculties themselves stood up against the University Ad-ministration and MHRD. Meanwhile, visits from the leaders of different political parties, such as Rahul Gandhi, Arvind Kejriwal, Sitaram Yechury, Jagan Reddy, increasingly politicized the case. Even BJP's Dalit leaders started showing displeasure openly over the whole case. Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thawarch and Gehlot also announced an Inquiry Committee from his ministry to probe into Rohith Vemula's suicide. Finally, the remaining four Dalit students' suspension was withdrawn on January 21. But by then it was too late. Following the incident Prime Minster Narendra Modi also acknowledged the importance of this case by giving a speech at Lucknow University. Seeing the delicacy of the situation Prime minister may have credited Rohith's suicide as a loss of Mother India's son but anti Dalit statements by his ministers and other BJP leaders highlights the dual face of the government. BJP National General Secretary P. Murlidhar Rao by adding fuel to the fire, accused Ambedkar Students Association of anti-national activities and questioned dead Rohith's caste identity. Similarly,

another min-ister VK Singh on social networking site Twitter called protesting students as dogs. How can a few words from the Prime Minister extinguish the fire that had risen from a Dalit student's suicide, if the perpetrators are not punished?. The whole event had brought before us many neglected but important issues. On the one hand, the autonomous status of the academic institutions is in danger. The way two Union ministers and a local BJP MLC S. Ramachandra Rao, influenced and pressurized the Vice Chancellor, exposes the reality of the autonomous stature of our Universities. But on the other hand, the treatment of the Dalit students of the Universities who were at the wrong end of 'feudal' treatment from the Ad-ministration, is also a critical matter. Claiming to be modern and democratic our Universities can't hear the voices that are being raised against it. Under the mask of the autonomous stature the Universities condemn the voices of Dalit students the same way Khap Panchayats shuts the social status of the dalits in villages. The Brahminical character behind the mask of autonomy of the Universities could be more monstrous, as we have seen in the con-text of Hyderabad Central University. Today the revolution led by the Dalit students across the Educational institutions in India challenging the autonomous misdoings can be seen everywhere. Dalit students association is fighting and demanding for the rights and entitlements under various names in various universities like- 'Dr. Ambedkar Student front of India' (DASFI), 'United Dalit students forum' (UDSF), 'Ambedkar Students Association' (ASA), 'All India Bahujan students forum' and 'Ambedkar-Periyar Study Circle' etc. Unlike other Stu-dent organizations, the Dalit student organization raise voice to debate on fundamental Dalit issues. In internal evaluation and interviews, the discrimination of the Dalit students can easily be witnessed. Though they may not have doubt on the commitment of Left student organizations but their differences over the strategy to under-stand and raise Dalit students' issues can be seen clearly. The high ethnic cultural domination is one of the key factors behind the exploitation but the Left still appears unwilling to contemplate. The issue of Dalit student Rohith's suicide has again forced to think about caste and caste politics. ABVP and Bandaru Dattatreya, in their accusations alleged ASA of anti-national and extremists activities and participation in racist activities in the campus. But were the actions against the Dalit students by the higher caste administrators, faculties and ABVP activists of the Hyderabad University along with BJP ministers not racist by the true definition of the word? In her press conference, the statements of Union Minister Smriti Irani declining the suicide as the outcome of discrimination how the Government views things through a fox's eye. Did Rohith's suicide had really nothing to do with his being a Dalit? Wasn't he related to Dalit politics? It could not be simply ignored that his identity

was questioned and politicized. Aren't the students from Dalit communities the ones who are thrown out of the institutions when there is crisis? After the suicide of a tribal student at AIIMS, when the Thorat committee was constituted to check the discrimination with SC, ST students, wasn't it mentioned in the report about the atmosphere inimical to Dalit students must live in? According to news report published in 'The Hindu' in the strongholds of racial discrimination in educational institutions, 18 Dalit students have committed suicide in the last four years. Four years ago in 2012, university Grants Commission (UGC) in its regulations had officially confirmed the tragic caste discrimination occurring in our campuses. Moreover, under the UGC regulations on 19 January 2013, racial discrimination against Dalit students has even been measured. But what will the higher caste autonomous institutions have to do with this?

It should be recalled that in February 2008, Another Dalit student of the same university in Hyderabad to pay the price of being a Dalit by his suicide. On one hand Mrs. Smriti Irani insist-ed of not making the suicide into Dalit and non Dalit debate but one the other hand BJP minister Dattatreya and University's ABVP leader Sushil Kumar embarrassed themselves by playing their own caste card. In reality, by ignoring caste you promote racism. To remove racial discrimination from the educational institutions it is primarily important to uproot ethnic discrimination of feudal era and to accept of Dalit exclusion, otherwise talented students such as Rohit Vemula will continue to vanish from the Indian universities.

- From the Widerstand;
Pondicherry University student magazine.

Narrative of Attacks on Students Movement and the Experiences of Struggle!!

If we review our experience as student activists over the last one decade in the light of the crisis today, then we ought to find both change and continuity. There is certainly a change in the scale of the attacks on higher education today. Under the saffron rule of the BJP/RSS, the intensity and viciousness of the attacks on higher education, on progressive values, on free thinking, on the idea of inclusive, democratic and affordable education for all have increased manifold. The forces of Manu and market, of Saffronization and Brahmanism, of privatization and jingoism have all been strengthened under the Modi rule. So, the changes are stark and at times drastic. But that should not take our eyes off the underlying continuities.

Even under the previous regime, the HRD minister had declared that "money must flow where the market is" in the context of further privatizing higher education. We saw the idea of affordable education for all as a basic right come under serious threat particularly since the neo-liberal turn. In the psyche of particularly the influential middle class education was increasingly turned into a service, and not a right. A service ought to be purchased in the market as every other commodity. And decent education is something that became increasingly accessible to only those who can afford it with their money or social capital. That basically meant a thin layer of upper class and upper caste section of the society. The attempts at turning universities into self-generating bodies, the consequent fee hikes in the context of lower and lower budgetary allocation into higher education and the commercialization of spaces were all observable even in JNU as elsewhere. We fought against the imposition of user charges and

renting out university spaces for commercial use as also the hike in prospectus prices.

Though rising voices of the oppressed castes finally forced the ruling disposition to promulgate reservations, but via several treacherous means (including the clause of "creamy layer") the Manuvadis continued to scuttle the just implementation of the same so as to scuttle social justice, to stall democratization of educational spaces, and maintain the dominant caste hegemony over knowledge production. Even in JNU the scuttling of reservation was rampant through insidious means that we tried to resist. Right from the scam involving cut-off criteria, to non-fulfilment of reserved seats to the blatant discrimination in viva-voce are all such issues that the progressive student movement of JNU tried to expose and resist. Demands for further democratization of education spaces like the demand for deprivation points for the otherwise grossly under-represented Muslims (in line with the Ranganath and Sacchar Committee Reports) were also throttled.

In their desperation to open up education to further privatization, to open the gates for foreign universities and to turn educational institutions into profit-making bodies they brought about fundamental changes. Education far from being an exercise to contribute to the betterment of the society and its downtrodden, has been turned into an industry to cater to the needs of the market, far removed from the concerns of the society. So, voices of dissent, criticality regarding government's anti-people moves and concerns regarding the oppressed – the Dalits, the Adivasis, the Muslims – was sought to be discouraged. The banning of the JNU Forum against War on People in 2010, that was formed to oppose the displacement of Adivasis for corporate interests was, for instance, an example of such crackdown that we successfully resisted. Even the successful agitation to ensure minimum wages for the workers in our university invited disciplinary actions. The ruling classes correctly identified this student's politics and what it calls the "unnecessary politicization" of the students as the biggest challenge in the way of its designs and hence came the Lyngdoh Committee Recommendations designed to erode this challenge. Despite our efforts in JNU and elsewhere, LCR was successful in throttling the voices of the students and incapacitating the student leadership while the attacks intensified. The anti-student LCR was resisted in JNU since 2008-12.

The students' movement against the LCR was premised on the fact that it was a politico-legal tool to suppress the democratic rights of the students coming from the oppressed backgrounds of the society and therefore it had to be resisted at all costs. LCR was necessary for the ruling classes to further the agenda of privatization of education, to be rolled off unchallenged in the country. As the

only difficulty for the government in implementing the neoliberal reforms in education was the organized students' movements in the country grounded in the form of student union bodies. Therefore LCR was formulated to curtail this organized students' body itself. We know for the fact that at the same time the people of this country were vehemently resisting the neoliberal attack on their lives and resources. Workers, peasants, women, Adivasis, Dalits in one voice were fighting the corporate loot of the resources, land, livelihood, forests, of this country. Be it the fight for land and livelihood in Singur, Nandigram, Niyamgiri, Anti-POSCO etc and workers movement for right to unionize in Manesar and the massive upsurge of workers in the NCR. Particularly in the case of workers, the government robbed off them the right to unionize and organize. Similarly, they tried to curtail the basic right of the students to participate in politics through the imposition of the LCR.

The present regime has added far more teeth to this attack. Hat is the continuity. While the moves towards privatization have only heightened, the ideological offensive of the RSS/BJP has today literally turned universities and educational institutions into a battle ground. That can be dubbed as the change. In places the weapon is saffronization as was visible in FTII, BHU or Allahabad, in other places it is Brahmanism like in IIT Madras or HCU. In Punjab it is fee hike, in DU it is privatization while in JNU it was in the form of an all out attack on our right to dissent. Patriarchal control and anti-woman moves too were encouraged through moral policing and discrimination on the line of gender. Puppets were installed in every institution whether Gajender Chauhan in FTII or Appa Rao in HCU, or Jagdish Kumar in JNU. The arrogance and authoritarianism reached its peak with the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula in HCU and persistent witch-hunt and saffron-casteist discrimination of Dalit students.

JNU was in the line of fire from the BJP government. Since the Modi's rise to power 2014, the universities have become the ideological battle ground. JNU known for its progressive-democratic space and left students' movement has been a sore in the eye of the BJP. The series of attacks on education institutions, mainly universities have become the norm of the day. After the FTII and Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle, it was HCU and followed by JNU. The institutional murder of Rohith Vemula in Hyderabad under the auspices of the Union ministers Bhandaru Dattatreya and Smriti Irani along with Appa Rao and ABVP only intensified the fight against this casteist and communal government. We fought against the ploy of the government to shield the perpetrators and bring them to justice. But all of them were rather shielded and promoted to higher positions with more power.

Post-9th February attack on JNU with the media witch hunt of students and teachers, a resounding response against it defeated the government's frontal attack on JNU. After that we have experienced a concerted and subtle attack on all the democratic spaces and culture. The intention of the ruling establishment seems clear: finish off the hard earned democratic spaces of the students in the university. The administration with all its might and impunity from the whole of state machinery has been clamping down on every dissent of students. The challenge really has come down to securing and defending the democratic culture of universities. But it is also a moment to come together and fight and struggle against the draconian measures of this government and the ruling classes towards a more just and democratic society with education as one of the tool for social change.

- Bhagat Singh Ambedkar
Students' Organisation (BASO), JNU

The Struggles of Revolutionary Students and Youth Front (RSYF) in Tamil Nadu

In Tamil Nadu, the earlier system of having four unequal state boards was abolished and the Uniform System of School Education Act was enacted in 2010. When Jayalalitha came to power in 2011, her government tried to destroy the uniform syllabus system in support of private school owners. For two continuous months, we had organized school students and held protests across Tamil Nadu. Other organizations also had conducted protests against this action by the government. Particularly, the militant road blockage protest led by RSYF with more than 1000 school students and parents near Chennai Central station has put a lot of pressure on the state government. 64 protesters comprising RSYF members and students were arrested. After we were jailed, we held a hunger strike in the jail as well. Finally, the government was forced to withdraw its decision to abolish the uniform board. Soon after, school books for the uniform syllabus were distributed to around 2 lakh school students.

Private schools are collecting huge amounts of fees despite laws and committee to regulate the private school fees. In June 28th 2012, we have laid siege to the Tamil Nadu Directorate of School Education building with more than 500 students and parents demanding to stop this fees loot by the private schools. Police brutally attacked and tried to arrest the students. Police found it difficult to make arrests as the students had resisted the arrest by joining hands with each other, forming a human chain and laying down on the ground. Raising slogans with a fighting spirit, the students foiled the police's actions and continued their protest. Condemning the brutal police attack on women and children there, the media also took part in the protest. Only after three long hours, the police could arrest us. 77 of us were arrested and went to jail. The protest had given a great pressure on government and the private educational institutes. Government officials raided the private schools charging exorbitant fees. The fees loot has

been stopped in many private schools. Before such a militant protest, most protests in Tamil Nadu were in the form of hunger strike, protest with police permission, gathering in atmost a single place and getting arrested if there is no police permission. So, the government had not paid attention to such kind of protests. Apart from standing up to the police, our protest had achieved its demand and also had become a leading model for the form of protest to others.

Calling for uprooting the privatization of education and implementing the common neighbourhood school system, the movement for abolishing privatization of education and conferences have been organized in five different zones – Chennai, Viluppuram, Cuddalore, Trichy and Karur – from July 12th to 30th to organize students and parents. The movement was taken forward with distributing around 2 lakh pamphlets to students across Tamil Nadu. In the Chennai conference around 1200 students had participated. Prof. Lakshminarayanan from HCU and A. Karunanandham, an educationalists from Chennai had taken part in this conference.

In 2014, when the Modi government has announced the celebration of Sanskrit week in schools, in an attempt to take forward its agenda Hindi - Sanskrit imposition. Opposing this, a siege protest outside the Padma Seshadri CBSE school was organized. Similarly, across Tamilnadu, we took forward the Sanskrit opposition week by dressing as Periyar and wearing black badges. Around 700 students have participated in the seminar we organised in Chennai. The management of the MCTM government-aided school planned to end some of its classes and build a shopping complex in that area. The school management has also threatened the teachers and parents using the police. We held a protest against this plan and stopped it. The police had beaten up the RSYF members and parents and arrested them. When other comrades from outside have stopped the police vehicle and started protesting, the police officers had to talk with their higher officials and finally let us go.

In 2015, around 6000 TASMAC liquor shops were run by the government itself. This is ruining the whole society. The masses are demanding the shops to be shut down. But the state government has not closed the shops because it did not want to lose the profit from them. Particularly, the shops near schools and colleges were ruining the lives of students. Girl students were harassed by those at the shops. Even after RSYF and other organiztions requested the government to close the TASMAC shops, there was no use. At last, it was decided in the RSYF unit in Pachaiyappa college that the government will not close the TASMAC shops and so the students have to. On August 3rd 2015, around 1000 students had demolished and closed down the nearby TASMAC shop. RSYF members

were attacked and twelve students including girl students were arrested. When they were attacked by the police inside the jail, the students have courageously faced the brutalities. This struggle greatly influenced the students and people in Tamil Nadu. The students in many places across Tamil Nadu started boycotting their classes demanding the release of the students and the shutting down of TASMAC shops. All party leaders have visited the students in jail and expressed their support. Further, this struggle has become a guiding event in the anti-liquor protests of the masses across Tamil Nadu. Our experience is that following the struggle by the Pachaiyappa students, today the women in Tamil Nadu are breaking and closing down the TASMAC shops across the state.

In 2016, a movement across Tamil Nadu was conducted against the Modi governemnt's 'New Education Policy' (NEP) with slogans, "Return of Manu Dharma! Return of Colonisation!" "Defeat the Brahmin – Baniya conspiracy!". Around 3 lakh pamphlets and 10,000 booklets have been distributed in the campaign against NEP among students and teachers. On Aug 28th 2016, protest meetings were conducted in many districts across Tamil Nadu. On September 1st 2016, a conference was held at Chennai with more than 2000 students participating. Eventhough it rained after sometime, the event had continued in a nearby hall. AIFRTE's General Secretary Mr. Ramesh Patnaik was the chief speaker. Also, Mr. Ramesh from APSC, IIT Madras also gave a speech. This meeting's message has been brought out in the newspaper format and 10,000 copies were distributed widely among students, professors and people. On September 20th 2016, protests burning copies of the New Education Policy had been conducted in 13 districts. Through campaigns, protests and conferences, we realized that the message, that Modi government's NEP which promotes corporatization and saffronization of the education had to be stopped, was taken well quickly across Tamil Nadu. We could also realize that this has brought trust about the organization among the parents.

In 2016, SVS medical college in Kallakurichi near Viluppuram in Tamil Nadu was functioning without government recognition. Among the students who were fighting against this management on this issue, three girls were killed by the college management and thrown into a well. The management repeatedly said the lie that the girls killed themselves. On knowing this, RSYF had gone to that area and organized the students and protested demanding justice for the three murders. From the local VAO to the university VC, from the police head constable to the district SP, from the MLA to the ministers, it was all these bureaucrats and politicians who helped running the college for the last ten years without any proper license. In the press meet we organized, the students of the college themselves had clearly exposed this to the public. We demanded that all

affected students must be given seats in government colleges. In a few days, all of them were transferred to Chennai government medical college. This incident has clearly exposed to the people how the medical education is in the clutches of private criminal mafia. The victory from this struggle has given the realization that unless the students get organized and fight relentlessly they cannot solve their problems.

The central government has given the right to recover the education loan amounts from the nationalized banks to the Reliance company. In name of getting back these loans, Reliance has been torturing the students. A student named Lenin from Madurai was pushed to suicide because of this kind of torture. Meanwhile, the central government has waived off Rs. 7016 crores loan amount to big corporates including Vijay Mallya. But the same government, for a few hundred crores of loan amounts, has given the recovering right to Reliance and is torturing students to death. With the slogan 'No repayment of education loan!', we have oragnized the students and conducted protests infront of SBI offices in Chennai , Trichy and other cities. Thus, we have exposed how the central government, SBI and Reliance trio is killing our students.

In 2017, many prestigious universities such as Madras University, Anna University, Madurai Kamaraj University and Law University were functioning without Vice Chancellors. Because of this, for the last three years, two lakh undergraduate and post-graduate engineering graduates and 1500 PhD students could not get a proper degree certificate. Going for higher studies or jobs has become very difficult because of this for these students. RSYF had conducted a protest, on May 4th 2017, condemning such injustice happening to the students. Ignoring the opposition, the state government still went ahead with the 2017 convocation with the higher education secretary signing the degree certificates instead of a Vice Chancellor. Condemning this scam, we organized the students and laid siege to the Anna University campus on May 17th, 18th and 19th, three days. Though the convocation was successfully held amid protests, the boycott of the function by around 200 professors has shamed the government. As the usual process of bribing with 50 crores for the post of VC and 50 lakhs for the post of professor has been exposed, the government has quickly appointed the Vice Chancellors within a week. Apart from these, we have held agitations and protests whenever problems occur in colleges and universities. Due to these protests, we have been facing false cases, arrests and imprisonment from the government and police.

- Revolutionary Students and Youth Front (RSYF), Tamil Nadu

Why the Pinjra Tod intervention?

Pinjra Tod is a movement that has been in the coming for several years now. Women have taken up the question of discriminatory rules and regulation in hostels with the administration on several occasions and have been successful in pushing back the deadline by an hour or two perhaps. However, the administration would respond by witch hunting these students.

This time around, when the Delhi commission of Women issued a notice to the Jamia authorities calling out the blatant discrimination in denying them any night outs, it was the first time when a government body acknowledged in so many words the situation, really. About the same time, women who have been engaged with questions of gender on campus got together in recognition of the fact that these rules are not specific to Jamia but exist across colleges and Universities in the country. These collective experience and narrative sharing was intensified by the Facebook page that was set up alongwith the petition addressed to the Delhi Commission of Women. Pinjra Tod, therefore, functions autonomously with about sixty members and many, many women who have identified with the movement and have articulated it collectively. The petition was started amidst stories pouring in from the entire country(literally, and from places like Patna and Patiala which counter the fact that something like Pinjra Tod is possible only in a very urban city like Delhi) of incidents that seem absurd at one hand and really just appalling on the other. The question is not just about discriminatory rules and regulations but the kind of moral policing and infantilising of women that takes place in these institutions. Women students are left with no bargaining power where to raise questions even about the bad quality of food can result in

threats of expulsion from the hostel whereas men can have the gall to take up lathis against their wardens on the same issue. Despite the fact that deadlines exist in mens hostel, it is culturally sanctioned that they can walk out of the hostel at any point in time, whereas women are judged for being even two minutes late, they are locked up even when a fire breaks out, not allowed to go see a doctor at night even as they clearly bleed. And these are not hypothetical contingencies but experiences documented in the Pinjra Tod report submitted to the DCW. This report has about 100 reports supporting the Charter of Demands that emerged in the course of the movement that emerged in the many interactions at meetings and while campaigning in various girls' hostels. The report is currently being studied by the DCW.

The idea that women students must be caged in hostels/ prison complexes after a certain time is only an extension of the patriarchal norms already existing in families and the society at large. The University conveniently ignores the constitutional rights of young adult women and chooses to be a Khap Panchayat where it replicates the model of a family, telling its inmates/students to be 'ideal women'. They wish to manufacture women of a certain kind, of a Brahmanical kind- who talks politely, wears 'decent' clothes,does not 'question' the administration, family or society, does not indulge in 'independent' or 'transgressive' relationships, marries into their caste and class, the qualifications are endless really! If she raises her voice and questions the patriarchal nature of the institution, she must be reigned in immediately. And the University chooses to remind young adult women this and show them their right place in the world by simply having them locked up as soon as the night starts to descend.

Pinjra Tod has been able to question this model of feminine behavior that the University prescribes for the women students, all the while also blaming it on the parents as happened when the Principal of Miranda House, Delhi University answered thus on being questioned why women were locked up at 8:30 PM everyday. The response of the administration has been interesting. A few colleges have done their bit of tokenism by extending the deadline by thirty minutes, saying women themselves don't wish to go out. Another college has abolished the concept of day slips(here women are to take day slips if they want to go out and purchase sanitary napkins even during the daytime) for the second and third years. Others, predictably, have begun by letting students know they are displeased with their involvement in the movement and will punish students of this kind by marking them poorly or not giving them a hostel seat next year. Another college has even put up a CCTV camera on the hostel gates, facing the streets, so they know who joins the protest and who they meet outside the gates.

Funnily enough, another college has decided to set a deadline two hours earlier than before because of the Paris attacks!

The University is a formative space where a student can learn to unlearn and unpack the injustices that the society conditions them into believing and practicing and this is why it is important to call out these practices. It is a time when a student can radically alter the course of their life. So if the University is denying women this space to question and critique, then this is a grave injustice being done to every woman who after having broken the many cages such as caste, class, region and gender to enter higher education only to be caged again. Ours is a country that still devalues women's education. The University is trying to discipline them into this kind of behavior through the warden-family-police nexus. It is also conveniently trying to hide the fact by denying these allegations. Indeed when the MHRD Minister herself says that women in the country are absolutely free to do whatever they wish to, wear anything and go anywhere, it was important for Pinjra Tod to intervene. A parcel was sent to her containing the hostel rule books of universities across Delhi. Such statements are shockingly ignorant but also part of a larger politics of trying to invisibilize questions of gender inequality.

It, therefore, was important to question the misogyny that one is bred into, not just at homes but also in the University. Using the argument of safety and leaning on morality as a yardstick, the administration effectively treats women students as half a student who, despite paying the same fees and often more as is the case in hostels, cannot access Laboratories, Libraries and Sports facilities after 8 in the night even if they remain open till 2 AM in the night. Pinjra Tod is trying to pin down the University on these pertinent questions of blatant sexism being practiced every day and which are justified in the name of infrastructural inconsistencies and inadequacies.

Society is able to get away by making women feel like they can inhabit public spaces only in the daytime. They are constantly made aware that this is not the time for a good woman to be out on the streets and she has no business being there. Add together the loving remonstrance of parents who reason that they tell you not to go out only because they care about you, and also the warden who waits like a dragon with flaring nostrils, ready to breathe fire on you if you so much as dream of a night out, let alone if you are just two minutes late! No wonder women feel unsafe (read: made to feel unsafe)and this is where the Pinjra Tod intervention has been important. In not only questioning the authority but in being able to lay thread bare the false argumentation around 'safety' and in being able to demystify it. If the reports of the NCRB (National Crime Records

Bureau) are anything to go by, about 8% of women experience violence at the hands of a stranger, the rest being the deeds of people known to them. Indeed, does this not sound like a convenient argument to deny women the ability to test and question 'safe' and 'unsafe' spaces for them? Pinjra Tod is a strong advocate of the fact that security can not be a pre-condition to women's autonomy and mobility, their ability to take their decisions on their own about when to go out or not and also to be able to fight their own battles and negotiate public spaces.

This is not to say that public spaces are gender sensitive however Pinjra Tod goes ahead and offers an imagination for alternate spaces. When angry women went ahead and occupied the streets with their presence and slogans, Delhi streets at 12 AM in the night did not seem so intimidating anymore. When men and women gathered to study together through the night right outside a library that does not remain accessible to women after sunset, that was just a simple demonstration of a library that does not limit women's access to resources just as it displays the choicest Feminist literature on its shelves.

Pinjra Tod questions the administration why it has chosen to shut up women and doubly victimize them, by already assuming they are/will be victims of harassment and by, of course, putting the onus on her as she is a bad woman if she is out on the streets. The University applies this dangerous logic just as a cover up for its negligence and laziness for not being able to promote gender equality on campus. The Delhi University being a case in point where the Saksham Committee Reports which advocated for functional sexual harassment complaints committees has been shelved. There are no Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee in place to allow for a place to register their complaint, let alone redressal.

By simply having functional complaints committees and having more street lights on campus, by allowing more women on the streets, just the very character of spaces in the University and in public can be changed fundamentally. This fractured access to public spaces beginning at home and then at the level of the University, curbing women's mobility and autonomy, their deliberate and institutionalised infantilization have been the key factors driving these women in Delhi to go out and rage collectively rather than agonising over it any further behind closed hostel rooms. Through Pinjra Tod, women are also critiquing the gendered nature of public infrastructure and resources of the city which then cut off women from participating in the larger socio economic and political processes of the nation as a citizen, and what may seem as intangible at that scale is clearly palpable at the level of democratic institutions like our Universities which are also sites of knowledge production.

Women's entry into the University has come after a long and protracted struggle and rules like these not only belittle that struggle but insidiously seek to control their lives and decisions. The liberal discourse of today is self congratulatory about having women in educational institutions. This erasure of feminist struggles comes via this very liberal articulation that enough has been done towards gender equality by merely allowing access to education, ignoring that the terms of their access to these institutional resources and spaces put women at an unequal footing. The strength of Pinjra Tod over the past few months has decidedly been the collective spirit of its functioning and experience sharing which has been able to call out the bluff of the Universities on 'gender equality'. The fact that these institutions can leave a woman on the street if she arrives late, as has happened so many times and has been testified by several women at the Jan Sunwai that we organized, clearly establishes that these rules are not for women's safety but because of anxiety around their sexuality. There have been comments made by wardens that if women are allowed to go out then there will be need to build maternity wards in the college. there have been remarks by principals stating that 'Girls and Boys are like eggs and stones and hence need different rules'. Another warden said that ' Women are victims of nature.' Underlying these statements is an argument that women's sexuality needs to be controlled and that justifies constant surveillance.

Women in these universities are also denied the public space to talk about these issues simply by delegitimising these issues as unimportant and 'auraton ki cheezein jo unimportant hoti hain' and 'women are so whiny about everything'. From the beginning of the struggle, Pinjra Tod has been working towards creating a political space for women where they can question and dissent. In Delhi university, out of the many girls colleges, only about 4 participate in the Students Union. What this effectively does is change the very nature of political discourses in the University where gender is easily sidelined. Indeed even in the way these Unions function, it is difficult for a woman to assert herself. Pinjra Tod in the way it goes about in its functioning and structure has been able to fill that void and many women have therefore been able to join the movement and articulate themselves. And therefore, inclusion in the students' unions has been an important demand raised through the movement. The movement has had to constantly stop and reconsider the language, rhetoric, gesture, strategies and nature of the movement to be able to question the gendered nature of political space and this self reflexivity has only strengthened the movement.

Right at this moment, Pinjra Tod awaits a directive from the Delhi Commission of Women which has received the Charter of Demands along with a petition

which was signed by about 2500 people. The directive will merely be one of the tools to further the struggle for these women are ready to rage on and take on the administration as soon as the University reopens for its next academic semester, with also the hope that the struggle will be taken up all over the country by women students to fight their own battles at every institution that perpetuates such practices of gender discrimination. Pinjra Tod will continue to battle institutionalised gender discriminatory practices while also working on confidence building moves that enable a woman to go out on the streets without a clock ticking in her head and without feeling like she doesn't have the ability to fight for herself. Indeed, the movement is working to redefine the University and create a student-administration relationship that doesn't function on the fear of punishment by giving women students more bargaining power. If this account has been self congratulatory in any way, it is only so because this stems from a whole lot of meditation and critique that has kept emerging at every step of the movement, posed by every woman involved and as the movement aspires to move forward, it has been able to assimilate these kinds of critique and work with them.

The struggle for equal access to a starlit night remains a deeply political one and these women are ready to fight the battle to the end.

- Pinjra Tod

(Source: Aaghaaz students magazine, Issue III, 2015-16 December- February)

Girl Students Protest at the University of Mumbai

It all began as a need for the 24/7 use of the Jawaharlal Nehru library for both the male and female students, which was demanded by the ABVP. Come to think of it now, it was merely another activity to add onto their agenda. Soon realizing that the girls had a hostel curfew of 11:00 p.m., this rose another issue that the hostelites were ready to talk with the party. They instantly took up the issue promising us that they will also demand for the rules of the girl's hostel to change so as to allow the girls to use the facility of the library. The protest took place at 2 in the afternoon of 3rd February and when the demands were not heard, the party decided to hold a hunger strike from the afternoon. The strike went on only till the next day when the VC came up with a proposal. On the 4th of February, the VC came to visit once again and when the issue of the girl's hostel was raised, he shrugged it off by saying that it was a traditional rule that the girls were to be inside the hostel by 11 p.m. and that he was not willing to change it. The strike continued thinking that we were still fighting for the hostel issue since the VC was ready to grant the 24/7 library. Little did we know that a proposal to start a reading room in the girl's hostel's mess was offered. The party members asked the female supporters to take time and decide before they accepted the proposal and promised us that they will continue the strike if we did not agree. But while we held our separate meeting, the party members had already accepted the proposal and the letter that stated that a committee will be formed comprising of professors, the girl's parents and few students to discuss whether the girls of the hostel will be able to use the library after 11 or not. The letter clearly stated that the VC was ready to give the access of the 24/7 library

but it was only applicable for the boys and the girls from outside the campus. This itself was a gender discriminatory approach as the committee was to be formed only for the girls and not the boys. The VC gave us a simple reason of our 'security'. Our only argument was that if the committee were to be formed, it should be both for boys and girls.

It must be brought to light that during the visit of the VC, he did make gender discriminatory comments like according to him, women are different from men and that by demanding a bend of rules of our hostel curfew, we were demanding completely different. He said that if we were really concerned about our rights and fight for equality, we never consider ourselves equal when we have a separate line in ticket counters and that we do not consider ourselves equal then. Other than that he also stated that women are different than men "mentally, physically and biologically". When asked why then are we being taught about feminism in our syllabus, he clearly stated that all those were only there on paper and will never be applicable when it came to practicing it. He thought that we had an ulterior motive for demanding the lapse of the 11:00 p.m. curfew.

This is what has led to the Free Movement to be put into motion because of the level of discriminatory rules set after the strike took place. The residents of the girl's hostel wrote a letter to the VC, the Registrar, the ABVP and the BCUD Director saying that we do not accept the proposal that was offered to us. Since then we have gathered support from many organization and campaigns like Pinjada Tod, students from TISS, JNU and Hyderabad University. The movement is still on the go and there will be a protest soon, not decided because one of our main person to lead the movement has been out of the city. Why Free Movement is because as long as there are rules, the administrators will come up with another discriminatory rules only for the girls. When the VC offered to turn our mess into a reading room after 9:30 p.m. it simply implied that the girls are to be inside the hostel no matter what. He said that we will be allowed to issue two books from the library and come back and read in the reading room. The other thing that infuriated us was that the although the rules are also there for the boys hostel, it has been many years since they do not follow the rules and there is no register for them to sign in before 11 p.m. like the girls do. Irrespective of whatever the gender, there should be rules for all is what we are saying. If we are demanding a 24/7 library, it should be accessible to all. You will be updated with further events if it takes place.

Note: Mumbai University declared an indefinite hunger strike from 7th March 2017 against the sexist regulations that restrict the movement of female students on campus. The collective under the name "Disowning Barriers" organized a protest march on 6th March which was to be followed by indefinite hunger strike from 7th March onwards. On 6th March 2017, the administration accepted all the demands put forward by the collective.

Disowning Barriers, University of Mumbai

(Source: Aaghaaz, students magazine, Issue VII, March-May 2017)

We must Continue to fight - Lessons from Struggles on TISS Campus, Mumbai

In past two years we have seen an upsurge of students' movements in campuses across the country. This has resulted not only in public visibility of issues that are being faced by students in higher education but more importantly led to politicization of a large number of common students on campuses. The resistance against cutting of non net fellowship in the form of OCCUPYUGC, the movement for Justice to Rohith Vemula and following the same, the movement for Najeeb Ahmed, Krish have raised strong voice against caste discrimination faced by students from marginalized communities, saffronization of campuses and privatization of higher education. However, we continue to see that more and more policy changes continue to be thrown at us at a speed that student community can no longer respond to each and everyone of these changes with an agitation or a protest.

At TISS, Mumbai the story has been no different. Over the last 2-3 years we faced an illegitimate fee hike, withdrawal of GOI – PMS (Government of India – Post matric scholarship) for OBC students in some states and just recently TISS withdrew financial aid which was provided to GOI-PMS students from SC/ST backgrounds. These policy shifts which have the capacity to undermine the very entry and survival of so many students in university spaces have been complemented with increased surveillance on campus using CCTV cameras, biometric cards, security guards and Aadhar cards! To top all this we also witnessed multiple episodes of undemocratic suspension of faculty from campus on very dubious grounds. The issues faced by non teaching staff remained largely unheard and found no space in student discussions or in the fancy seminars or anywhere else.

Even after protests and public meetings we managed to get only a marginal rollback of fee for second year students and the rest of the measures were implemented as such. The administration was clever enough to announce most of these changes through notifications made public during vacations when most of the students were not on campus. The threatening mails sent by administration to students succeeded in instilling fear in everyone as no student organizations or collectives could come out against such autocratic doings of officials in the administration.

After an honest reflection one could possibly say that we as students also failed to build effective resistance against such attacks on campus democracy and on rights of the students. The divisive politics by student organizations, who took most of their decisions to serve solely organizational interests, failed to build a joint movement on critical issues. It is a fact that the slogan of 'Student Unity Long live' can no longer be expected to be realized as easily due to the deep crevices formed between different ideological camps and rise in consciousness about caste, class, gender differences which occur even among ourselves. But we must see to it that larger ideological differences should not push us into a state of inaction. We must build consensus and be able to take firm stands on immediate on-campus issues.

In the present times the student activists in campus need to be focus on steady politicisation of students around them, instead of spending all their energy on rhetorics and furthering popular politics. As much as we need student political organizations who commit to organized politics, we also need to pave ways to build networks between different organizations who could have a common minimum stand on issues. The organizations should engage with the issues of caste, class, gender, sexuality and members should not shy away from discussing our own identities, backgrounds, histories etc. It is essential to bring visibility to outside campus issues in campus and further move towards higher level of organizing of student movements. In all the spaces we must aspire to bring more and more dalit, adivasi, bahujan, women leadership to the fore.

The situation has worsened all around us - the lynching of Dalits and Muslims, displacement and killing of Adivasis, selling off of invaluable natural resources to big MNCs and corporates, ghettoization of poor people in urban and rural spaces etc – and we as students cannot afford to sit silent. A large section of population continues to be misinformed about the reality by the paid media. We, as students must pick up both – pen and voice – to steer away the myths being created by those in power. We must remember the contribution and struggles undertaken by the likes of Savitribai Phule due to which we are in educational

spaces today. We must create a shared imagination for a better world and should become a part of larger struggle against oppression at the hands of the exploitative State. It is in times like these that we must draw inspiration from Babasaheb's slogan of Educate, Agitate, Organize and march ahead!

Shefali

Radical Study Circle, TISS, Mumbai

Campaigns by COLLECTIVE Against Increasing Emphasis on English Language skills in BA Entrance Exams for Foreign Language Courses in JNU

Collective is an independent political organization working in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. We have been working since August 2015 through campaigns, surveys and a bi-annual publication around issues primarily concerning university students. Some of our campaigns in the past have highlighted and sought to mobilize opinion on campus about discrimination based on language proficiency, problems of merit-based hostel allocation, the need to evolve more bottom-up mechanisms of decision-making in student movements etc.

From the end of February to the beginning of April 2017, Collective carried out a campaign among students of the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SLL & CS) against the steady increase in English language marks in BA admission test held in SL, over the last few years. This test is held for candidates seeking admission in undergraduate programmes for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Spanish, Russian etc. In the examination, students are tested on their general knowledge, language aptitude and English language skills. But the percentage of marks (weightage) for testing their knowledge of English language (grammar, comprehension, creative writing) had been rising at an alarming rate. While it was only 10% in 2000, it increased to 34% in 2007 and 60% in 2010. Last year, in 2016, the percentage of marks for testing English language skill had gone up to almost 75%. This step had had palpable outcomes for the student composition of the school: a diversity of students coming from different social locations had given way to the dominant presence of students who had access to English-medium schooling.

With the aim of building pressure on the SL administration to revoke these changes and reduce the weightage of questions on the English language, Collective campaigned in undergraduate classrooms in SL through the month of March, speaking to students and collecting signatures on a petition addressed to the SL Dean. Another concrete demand was to strengthen the Linguistic Empowerment Cell (LEC) within the university. We emphasized in our conversations that the knowledge of English is not a primary requirement for learning any of the foreign or Indian languages and that this undue emphasis on English would mean that a large number of students from deprived backgrounds and with no access to education in English medium schools would be discriminated against. It would destroy to a great extent the inclusive nature of the student population in SL.

While acknowledging that English language skills have become nearly indispensable in today's job market we asked how this need should be addressed within the space of the university - should we design the entrance level question paper in such a way that the applicants who lack such proficiency and skill in English get blocked at the entry level itself? Or should we ensure that students from various proficiencies and regions be allowed to get in and then create enough provisions in the University - such as the LEC - to support and facilitate them in improving their language skills. SL has a high drop-out rate as has been repeatedly noted by students organizations on campus and the administration alike and which forced the admin to setup a committee to investigate the reasons for it earlier this year. Given this pattern, failure to ensure institutional support from the university would only worsen the situation. Collective also tried emphasizing in its campaigns the way in which English proficiency affects every walk of our University life, from classroom participation to ways of writing descriptive answers in term-papers or end-semester exams, from participation in informal academic discussions after classes or "confident" participation in certain friends' circles, to even participation in the political life of the campus. In order to build an inclusive university, the fight to reduce the excessive emphasis laid on English language both at the entrance level as well as in classrooms and outside, needs to go on.

More than 700 students of the School of Languages, across all clusters and centers, signed a petition to the Dean of the school, asking for reduction in weightage given to English language. On 7th March, students of SL went and submitted the petition to the Dean. The Dean accepted that the last year's question paper was indeed difficult and that this pattern should be reviewed. On receiving the petition, she agreed to put the matter to discussion with the rest of the faculty members. The Board of Studies (BoS) is the school-level decision

making body comprising primarily of the dean, chairpersons and professors (by rotation) across centres and limited student representation. In the BoS meeting held on 10th April, in response to the initiative taken by the students, the Dean announced that the weightage for testing English language will be reduced to 40%. The current prospectus (2017-18) also mentions that the pattern for the BA entrance examinations has been changed to a more objective pattern, indicating less dependence on the descriptive subjective type questions.

While the decision to reduce the English weightage announced at the BoS shows that the Dean had to submit principally to the demands of the students, we still need to remain vigilant about its implementation. We also feel that 40% as weightage for testing English is also considerably high. While Collective had tried to bring the issue and the campaign around it to the notice of the wider university community by writing parcha-s and posters, the focus was on students of the school itself. Campaigns in classrooms and in front of the school building were carried out not in the name of the organization but centered around the issue at hand. This went a long way in enabling open and insightful conversations with students, many of whom felt the urgency of the situation, given how their friends/relatives from their own localities seeking admission in JNU in the coming years would have to bear the brunt of these changes. The response was overwhelmingly positive. From our conversations it also emerged that students from deprived backgrounds who might be scoring less in the test because they find the sections on English grammar and comprehension too difficult, often end up getting a lower rank. The system is such that the Asian language cluster comprising Urdu, Persian, Arabic etc. is placed lower down the scale compared to European and East-Asian language clusters - so students with lower ranks are assigned these languages, reinforcing privilege in insidious ways. Students from across departments who we had met and interacted with mostly during the class campaigns, participated in the delegation to the Dean, which helped make dialogue more effective. That being said, although we tried hard to widen our base as far as possible, during our final round of interaction with students after the BoS meeting, their responses were often along the lines of gratitude for the results we had achieved. The sense of participation and belongingness in the whole campaign seemed to be lacking in a lot of cases. We hope to address this shortcoming in struggles we initiate in the future. This would be possible perhaps by prolonging our conversations formal as well as informal with students and providing more space for both suggestions as well as doubts within our campaigns.

- Collective, JNU

Students struggles at the Central University of Kerala

The anti-education and anti-student policies adopted by the Central University of Kerala under the guise of unavailability of funds and the age-old excuse of 'infant university' is no more valid. The student community in CUK is fed up of the lies and excuses the administration has been feeding them for too long now. It may be possible to do some last-minute whitewashing to put up a sturdy image in front of the chancellor and parents during the convocation ceremony or NAAC visit, but the reality in the university is all too different. Crammed classrooms and limited access to University facilities is the harsh reality the students here are getting accustomed to. Despite the relentless protests and pleas, the administration has turned blind eye to the basic needs of the students.

It was after three years of putting off and constant plea to the administration that the hostel buildings were opened for the students last October. Unfortunately for the students who thought that rooms would come with tables and chairs, they were hugely mistaken. A series of protests was to conducted in the following months for basic amenities like chairs, tables, Wi-fi, street lights on the roads to men's hostel, many of which still lay unaddressed and unresolved. The washing machines which were used in the previously rented hostels vanished into thin air or locked away.

Recently, the issues boiled over owing to the increase in the number of seats which was a unilateral decision by the VC. This hike was disproportionate to the infrastructure facilities, including transportation, accommodation etc. The UGC regulations clearly instruct proportionality with regards to the student-

teacher ratio, laboratory and library, among other facilities. The university unpreparedness was a blatant disregard of the same which has left many students with the option of leaving the university unless they can afford private facilities around the university. Women students are the most affected many of whom stay in the university hostels on a temporary basis fearing eviction any day. CUK is situated in a rural area, unlike Delhi or Hyderabad where the students are not faced with the difficulty to find adequate and secure accommodation facilities, which makes its case unique. In fact, the allotted first year students are crammed three in a room disregarding the twin-sharing policy. The Vice Chancellor made it very clear that the incoming PhD scholar would not be allotted rooms in the hostels. Policies and attitudes like these make the students question the very idea of university education. The university's apathetic attitude has put the students in a difficult predicament.

The recent struggle launched by the student community in CUK seeks an innovative mode of protest with a creative effort. Drifting away from the conventionality, the student community united for the same cause to ensure hostel facilities for all needy students, not under the aegis of any political party but as the Joint Action Council. The basic understanding that violent protests which could last for a week at its best wouldn't be effective in moving the administration to do the needy sparked the idea of a legitimate and useful protest with a creative angle. Our needs had to be articulated in the most symbolic as well as demonstrative way and violence wasn't the way forward. Then what kind of a protest was desirable? This was the first question we faced.

Talking to the educationalists and academicians as well as experienced PhD scholars we understood that the lack of political culture in the university was something we needed to overcome through our mode of protest. In this scenario, the women's collective came forward with a strategic plan and solution. Occupying the libraries and classrooms in all three campuses of the CUK, namely Periye, Padannakkad and Vidyanagar, by women students would put enough pressure on the administration to do the necessary immediately. The student's collective united under the single name Student Refugee Movement. Our aim was to exert pressure on the administration from all levels. This had to be internal as well as external. While the occupying protest took care of the pressure internally, the media support as well the petitions filed to Central and state bodies was to exert pressure externally.

The first night of occupying CUK was heeded by the administration with disinterest, which forced us to extend the protest further. We had problem

with the attitude of the university administration and it had to be altered. The following day, both girls students and boys launched protests by occupying the campus, library and classrooms of the main campus. The administration responded by shutting down the classes indefinitely citing a false claim that the student community has been disrupting normal academic procedures of the university. This is a blatant lie as the very basis of our protest was to study. The vengeful tactic of the university wasn't completely unanticipated given its infamous history. The student community stood together in the face of this crisis, something we would call unchartered territory. The unanimous decision to move forward with occupying was dealt with bitterly, forcefully evicting the students from the library thus locking down the only accessible study area on the campus. Nevertheless, the Student Refugee Movement went ahead with their struggle by occupying the Multipurpose Hall and other parts of the campus pulling all-nighters, writing posters and conducting discussions.

The Student Refugee Movement holds that 'If accommodation is denied, occupying is protest; when education is denied, learning is protest'. The university's inability to comprehend the idea behind our protest is quite evident in their impulsive and nonsensical actions. We decided to protest by conducting classes, talks and guided discussions among ourselves on a variety of topics like, Scientific methodology, Feminism, Education, International Relations, Photography among others and preparatory classes for UGC-NET.

Our demands are basic and simplistic. Given the backwardness of this region, the university needs to ensure safe and equal accommodation facilities for all the needy students. The first step towards a solution is the change in the attitude of the administration which to some extend can be claimed successful. Finally the Vice Chancellor has invited the students for dialogue and we are hopeful that our movement would be successful in securing the rights of the current students and many more who would come in the next years. Let our movement be an inspiration for students' struggle in education institutions all over.

- Student Refugee Movement

Central University of Kerala, Kasaragod.

Message from the Kashmir University Students Union

Jammu and Kashmir is an occupied territory and I speak to you as an occupied. At the very outset, I would like to thank the organizers for inviting us to the program but it was better for us to send you a message from this forgotten part of the world. I speak to you as a student of and in Kashmir Let me introduce myself before sharing some of my experiences or viewpoint. My name is Mehraj and I am pursuing my PhD research in the University of Kashmir and have been involved in student activism from almost more than half a decade in Kashmir University. As you might be aware of this fact that the face of student activism or you can say the only student organization which is working in Kashmir University is known by the name of KUSU (Kashmir University Students Union) and has been banned since 2009 after its office was razed to the ground by the university authorities.

To begin with, what you may understand from 'student activism', same does not apply to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, for what is accepted as a 'state' or country or government, 'as' or 'of', İndia', is known as an Occupying country in the state from where I speak to you. While your struggle may by for the rights of the students, to speak to express and to question to criticize or to stand against what you call as 'fascist regime', the student activism in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is pitched against imperialism that has not ended for the citizens of the Paradise on earth. J&K is an occupied territory, colony of India, which happens to be 'Your Country" not accepted by the people of my state as theirs. The first and the last point of any struggle in the state of J&K is freedom from occupation and right to self-determination.

A nation cannot accept the maneuvered meaning of their word 'AZADI' which has been recently raised in India, while 'AZADI" has been resonating in J&K since more than half a century now and it meant not the Misappropriated and as claimed 'AZADI within India'. But not only has the word been copied but the style of raising the voice for azadi too has been copied. Our azadi is not only from manu wad, jaati waad etc etc but you must know the definition and context of AZADI which people always shout in this state is 'Bharat ka Aayeen Humein Manzoor Nahi Manzoor Nahi" meaning we do not accept the constitution of India. So how could a student activist from the 'most militarized zone on the face of the earth' stand with you in you struggle within your system?

I hope the basic premise of us and your struggle being diametrically opposite to each other stands cleared. And what follows of student activism there is not and cannot be equated and compared with consequences of student activism in Kashmir. In Kashmir, the consequences of activism start from inhumane torture in the jail, slapping PSA (Public Safety Act) where a government can book you for two years in jail without any proof of any "anti-national" activity though Kashmiris are not anti-Indians which Indian state has not understood so far. Meaning our activism is threat to the safety of Public and an activist should be thrown behind the bars without trail. A Kashmiri in custody means no musings on shared humanity. A Kashmiri is treated as a true adversary-an enemy; zero human connection. For a Kashmiri, detention is about incarceration without warrant in an army camp, or a secret prison; no habeas corpus, not even the First Information Report. The Armed Security Special Powers Act (AFSPA) allows detainment and includes powers to shoot "any person who has committed a cognizable offence or against whom a reasonable suspicion exists that he has committed or is about to commit a cognizable offence." You might be carrying a gun, a stone, a bitter gourd for dinner or nothing at all.

In Kashmir University, where even people's existence is not safe under the state of emergency that the occupation has imposed, the right to free expression, like the "activists in Indian universities" seem to advocate, has never been a possibility. Yet, people express themselves courageously, in defiance of India's nationalist codes, and they truly defend this practice by putting their lives at risk for it. In its brutal discourse, the Indian state apparatus treats all Kashmiris in the manner of combatants. This exchange, while often fatal, is also seen as a compliment by most Kashmiris who have become bold in flaunting their emotional, cultural and territorial difference from India. Life is precious and those who live under continuous gaze of the barrel of the gun know its worth more than anyone else. What happened to Rohit Vemula and other of his ilk must not happen to any one

however at the same breath we inform you not like you were by your Media houses that 126 youth, were hunted on the streets of the state in 2010 only and I know you have not yet heard of Shaista Hameed and Danish Farooq. Shaista was a recent graduate in her early 20's, and Danish a university student in his late teens. The two were shot dead by government force in Kashmir the day before Modi regime started its attacks against JNU students. We have sacrificed men women and children in Lacks in the most inhumane way. A child thrown in air and shot by the government mercenaries is how India plays an inclusively exclusivist politics. This is the paradise where all hell has been let loose. In its brutal discourse, the Indian state apparatus treats all Kashmiris in the manner of combatants. This exchange, while often fatal, is also seen as a compliment by most Kashmiris who have become bold in flaunting their emotional, cultural and territorial difference from India. While you copy our dialectics of demanding AZADI, next time you shout it remember this slogan came from Kashmir and AZADI for them is Right to self Determination.

To add, at the end, I will reiterate what we (Kashmir University Students Union) said when the JNU fiasco was unfolding. WE stand in support to individuals, organizations, civil society members, intellectuals and all those who stand in support of our Right to Self Determination promised by India's first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, in the heart of Srinagar, Lal Chowk, on whose name JNU was formed. In your struggle you have received immense support from people beyond territorial and cursed nation-state boundaries of India and we with our deepest condolences may be added to the same list. The same day frothing TV journalists were holding court martials against Umar Khalid and KanhaiyaKumar, the news of Shaista's and Danish's cold blooded murders was quietly suppressed—part of a larger history of suppression, which makes a certain kind of "national conscience" possible in India. The two were not armed, but they were protesting the terror unleashed by troops in their villages, and they wanted to protect a fellow youth who among many now have yet again been forced to give their lives to end the occupation. They didn't know JNU was ringing with slogans for Kashmiri rights the day they died, nor did JNU know that their protests against the silence on Kashmir had become more imperative than ever.

- Kashmir University Students Union's drafted message for The Convention of People's Resistance, 2nd April 2016, Mumbai

Message from the Manipuri Students Association (Delhi)

Greetings from the Manipuri Students' Association Delhi (MSAD), since the change of the regime, the heartland of India has witnessed unprecedented political unrest, even penetrating into the University spaces resulting in the institutional murder of Rohit Vemula, branding of democratic forces as 'anti-national', even leading to arrest. In any case, the regime in Delhi does not matter for many regions in India, like Manipur. And people from such regions are privileged and enjoys the luxury of critiquing left, right and centre. What happened at the University of Hyderabad was very unfortunate, it narrates the age old outdated practice of oppressive caste system, where millions have suffered and continues to. MSAD stands in Solidarity to the democratic fight for Justice for all the oppressed caste and class.

Since the University of Hyderabad Incident and the JNU row, there has been an intense debate on nationalism, where arrays of narratives have been articulated. The Government hasbranded the dissenters as 'anti-national', it went on a spree of branding each and every dissenter as 'anti-national'. MSAD expresses its solidarity and salutes the fight against freedom to dissent. But MSAD is also very much critical and sceptical about the form of protest emerging out of JNU. No doubt the Indian state has adopted the strategy of tagging students as anti-nationals from UoH to JNU. But most JNU students fail to critique the very idea of nation/nationality and nationalism. Instead at the various protests in relation to JNU, there has been a constant showcase by the students and others supporters to prove themselves as nationalist with use the use symbols of nationalism, such as the waving of the tricolour flag trying to prove themselves

as more nationalists. The debate went into who is more nationalist and who actually is an anti-national. Narendra Modi speaks of Kashmir as an integral part of India, so does JNU intellectuals, students and all alike. So, it appears the left oriented JNU students and intellectuals are no less than the nationalists. But whether Kashmir or Manipur would be an integral part of India lies with the decision of the people of Kashmir and Manipur. There is a conversion of the 'right' into 'left'; and 'left' into 'right'. While members of ABVP resigned on the ground that the BJP has become fascists, the so-called 'left' are trying to prove themselves as more nationalists. There is no left,right or centre when politicians reach the parliament, there are only nationalists. Many JNU alumni proclaim themselves as 'left' but it becomes a different story when they start practicing electoral politics.

India is a multi-national state and the ideas of nationalism need a critical look. An absolutely blind faith in the constitution that allows more than 50 years of AFSPA 1958 seems to suggest a sorry condition of the intellectuals. There are less than 10 scholars in India ready to talk about the history and politics of the turbulent North East. All intellectuals, be it 'left' or 'right', be it historians or social scientists runs away from the issue claiming that they are not the 'expert' of North East; that it was a subject to be discussed by the military. The enormous power given to the Military deployed in Kashmir and North East has been a nightmare for the indigenous populations. Everyone is a 'suspect' under AFSPA 1958, the worst is when the population is racially distinct. Rape, torture, and disappearance has been a routine affair in these regions and has been 'normalised'. Prabhat Patnaik (the Marxist economist) who spoke in JNU recently claims the formation of the Indian state as a result of Social contract. In contrast, the marriage of Manipur and India was a forced marriage and that there was no social contract. Manipur was the First country in South East Asia to have Universal adult franchise and adopt a popular democratic elected government in 1948. Manipur enjoyed a short independence after the British left. It became a sovereign state on 14th August 1947. It had its own constitution which was already drafted by 15th May 1947 and the Manipur State Constitution Act was adopted on 26 July 1947 making Manipur as an autonomous state. And by 18th October 1948 after an adult franchise the first state assembly was held, presided by the Monarch as a constitutional head, and a popular ministry started functioning. Soon Manipur Lost its sovereignty as it was forcefully merged with India using force on 21st September 1949. Bypassing the elected representatives, the Monarch was forced to sign the merger agreement in Shillong. The subsequent armed movement evolved after the merger has been the genesis of conflict and the continuance of

militaristic outlook towards Manipur by India till today. A retired General, Vijay Kumar Singh is the present Minister of Development of North Eastern Region.

While the rest of the India celebrates Children's Day on the birthday of Nehru. 14th November reminds us what Nehru did to the oppressed people of India. The first prime minister of India, Mr. Nehru said in the parliamentary debate on 23rd August 1956, says "I should like the house to remember that they should look at this in the larger context of our general policy in these areas, not only in Naga Hills but in the NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) and neighbouring areas. Many of these areas were for the first time brought under some kind of administration during the last six to eight years". It only shows that Nehru was not only interested in the Naga Hills but wanted a 'general policy' for all areas in the Northeast. He further said, "We had to send some of our forces with rifles and we did it without fuss. But we proceeded slowly because we had the object of winning them over and not merely crushing them. We had, of course, to shoot some because they shot at us." He added, "Our instruction is that patience must be exercised because we want to win over these people", "but make it clear to the hostile that a person who used his gun against us will be met with gun and army can't be withdrawn". Nehru had already presumed that the State was at war with the people of the region. It reflects the content of India's general policies in the region at that time. He also says "I consider it fantastic for that little corner between China and Burma and India to be called an independent State". Nehru's mind and attitude towards the region could be understood from the statement he made on 23 August 1956 two years before AFSPA was passed in 1958. He says, "It was easy enough to declare martial law and hand over the whole area to the military, but we did not do so because we have been against treating this as purely military problems". While Nehru claimed that declaring a military law was 'easy enough', he already knew the danger of military law, "Naturally when armed forces function and have to deal with hostile elements, the civil power's activities are rather limited". Nehru thus referred to the entire community of a region, who should have been treated as subjects of the state as 'hostile elements'. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 (AFSPA) is one of the most draconian legislation made by Nehru as a Prime Minister of India in 1958 as a gift to the racially different people of India to suppress and oppress the mind and body of the people as a bondage to the martial law called AFSPA. For Manipur, 14th November, the day is not to be a celebration day for the children, instead, it is the day for condolence as to remember the architect of AFSPA which has been producing thousands of widows, orphanages, survivors of rape, disappearances, and killing of people.

This Act serves the agenda of creating a category of suspects and 'disturbed areas' to be oppressed at will; to suppress democratic voices against oppressive political regimes, exploitative market forces and destructive projects. The Act is symptomatic of an undeclared war trajectory superimposed on a category of subjected people, whose political aspirations and democratic rights are marginalized in the name of India's security. Unfortunately, Indian state still does not consider repealing this military Act despite fifteen years of Irom Sharmila's fasting and 57 years of people's struggle against this draconian Act, the State holds on AFSPA dearly, as it acts as a surrogate in military engagement with neo-colonial and neo-liberal structure at the same time, the agencies such as the military establishment and the corrupt personnel operating on the ground uphold AFSPA, in the name of counterinsurgency, as it serves certain extra-institutional personal interests.

The idea of absolute belief in the Indian judicial system is ridiculous. There is a need for a critique of the judicial system which an elite institution turning a blind eye to the unprivileged; where thousands of prisoners have much less than a trial because they could not afford to fight a case. Hardly there has been any changes in the structure of state institutions like the police, military, bureaucracy which works on the colonial structure. The Indian state which is a result of the colonial rule has not changed much for the oppressed and the unprivileged. The status quo remains the same. The state is still run by the elites which make no differences with the British rule. The rapists and murderers of Thangjam Manorama remain scot free till now. And Manorama is not a single case in Manipur. Manipur has been a killing field, and a culture of absolute impunity prevails. An overwhelming 1528 extra-judicial killings by state and central forces has been documented by an Imphal-based human rights group since 1979 till 2012, which includes 31women and 98 children. The suffering of the people goes beyond the state when one migrates to cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai etc. People hailing for North East has been subjected to Racial discrimination. And in many instances, people from this region has been raped and murdered in the mentioned cities. And the Indian State does not even acknowledge the existence of racism.

MSAD believes that the fight for democracy and justice has to take beyond the university walls, out to the peasants, the poor, the unprivileged, the oppressed. In Universities, particularly JNU, Hyderabad Central University and Jadavpur University has seen the dissent against authoritarianism, and the recent militarization in UoH is condemnable;but we must not forget Manipur University where an army camp stands right in the middle of the university. While the army

camp is too much in itself, it is put right behind the women's hostel and army convoys are a regular sight there. The presence not only signifies the physical oppression but also the oppression of the thoughts; university, where thought formulation in the academia takes place, is also under the supervision of the military and which all the democratic forces must also fight. Once again MSAD stands for freedom to dissent and fights against oppression; that the fight must be expanded to all universities and beyond its wall.

Long Live the Students' struggle!
Long Live People's Struggle for Democratic Rights!
Long Live Democracy!

- Manipuri Students' Association's (Delhi) drafted message for The Convention of People's Resistance, 2nd April 2016, Mumbai.

Women Hold Up Half The Sky And Revolution Too : Narratives from the Chaithanya Mahila Sangam

The day Chaithanya Mahila Sangam (CMS)has formed; it was very keen in building struggles in support of students on various issues. As women are also divided under class, religion, and caste in this society. CMS has framed its work style among the students with a proper perspective on the class, religion, and caste divide. Our organization's main concentration is on the Government colleges, social welfare hostels and it also works inside the universities especially in Hyderabad.

Dalit students suffer a lot in the social welfare hostels. The social welfare board has to provide mess, cosmetic charges, books, clothes, plate, tumbler, bucket and other personal charges. They should also provide light, fan, and regular security measures like compound wall with fencing, warden, etc. The government has always failed to do this. The Dalit women inmates in the social welfare hostels fall prey to sexual harassment by the gent staff and they also suffer the mental harassment caused by both the male and female staff. Dalits are the subaltern community in our society, they are forced to suffer lenient outlooks, irresponsible attitude and discrimination and these conditions have made our organisation concentrate on mainly on the Dalit student issues.

Protests on problems existing in social welfare hostels:

In Mahaboobnagar, two girls were sent out of the hostel after returning from holidays with an excuse of not bringing their local guardians. We met the officials and demanded and got back their hostel seats. In many hostels, the wardens never provided hygienic food and that led to the death of Sujatha and

Chittamma. In another incident, the warden punished a girl for urinating in front of the hostel. In one more incident, the warden's husband along with his friend tortured a girl sexually. In Tirupati, in one of the social welfare hostels, the Superintendent, attender and the sweeper behaved in a very cheap and abusive manner with the inmates of the hostel. When the harassment crossed the border line, they sat for hunger strike. On the first day, no official bother their protest. On the second day, our local CMS unit joined their protest and made the officials transfer one and suspend the other two.

The Chandrababu's regime decided to remove all the girls' social welfare hostels from 1st to 5thand limit it to 6th to 8th classes. They forced the students from 1st to 5th to take their transfer certificates and leave the hostels. This was the poisonous thought of Chandrababu to keep Dalits and Tribals away from basic education. We took this issue as a serious one pamphlet and poster campaign against this. All the CMS units throughout Andhra Pradesh and Telangana carried forward the same campaign and few units did rallies, few met RDO, COLLECTOR and represented a memorandum and conducted hall and public meetings to take the issue into the public vision.

In Guntur, a hostel consisting of 300 students had only one public toilet for 120 students. This unhygienic conditions made all students contract to various types of diseases. The same situation continued for three days, the girls, who could afford the medical facilities went for the treatment outside and those could not suffered with the ill health. This pathetic condition led to the death of a eight year old girl kalyani. The wardens and officials tried to calm down the matter without any police case. Our local CMS unit entered into the issue and demanded the suspension of the warden and also fought for ex gratia. The next day, we along with other student movements encircled the D.D and demanded the suspension of the warden, but the D.D did not show any response. So we were forced to take the dead body and do a road blockade programme. The third consecutive day the A.C. College students again did a dharna and this forced the officials to transfer the warden and suspend the watch women.

The state government introduced a G.O 191 and kept the rule that only 100 students strength is allowed per hostel. The dalit students and other women's organisations formed a joint action committee and did a pamphlet and poster campaign. We also took a rally against this with 3000 students and submitted a memorandum.

2005:In Hyderabad, in Bolakpur hostel, there were no permanent warden, the seats were not filled, all basic amenities charges were not provided, there were no medical facilities and even the mess bills were not reimbursed. Our local CMS unit did a dharna and encircled the officials until the fulfillment of the demands and achieved success in that struggle.

2007: In Hyderabad, we along with the Saidabad Colony and Bolakpur students did a dharna. In the same manner the Vijayanagar Colony and Gudimalkapur Colony students also did a dharna against the sexual harassment and for basic amenities.

2008:In Bolakpur, L.B.Nagar students fought against the atrocious nature of the hostel wardens, employees and lack of basic amenities with the help of CMS local unit did dharnas.

2009: In Hyderabad, the Bolakpur hostel students fought proper water facilities, note books, for permanent warden and basic amenity charges. They were even facing the tensions with thieves. They did a dharna and got a new bore well with their struggle.

In Mahaboobnagar, our local CMS unit did a rally till the R.D.O office to solve the problems of student managed SC and BC hostels.

Struggles among the University students

In the Osmania campus, the ABVP boys misbehaved with the girls. A rally was taken from the science department to Arts College and conducted a public meeting. Our CMS local unit participated in that.

In Osmania University, the VC took a decision to close the hostels from June 1st. The students usually prepare for groups and other competitive exams. 14 student organizations formed a united struggle committee and took a rally from Law College to Administrative building. The students intensified their struggle through hunger strike. The police lathi charged the students. Our local CMS unit was part of this movement till the end.

The upper caste students printed pamphlets and posters discriminating the dalits Central University of Hyderabad. They used the words like 'People relying on other's money', 'Cheaters', 'Swines', and 'the people, who escape paying mess fees'. We were part and parcel of the united struggle along with Ambedkar movement. This struggle amalgamated with rallies, hunger strikes and other protest forms went on for many days.. Later the court gave order for the students to use library and instructed the management to solve the problem in one month.

In the Central University of Hyderabad, 10 dalit students were rusticated. This happened due to an altercation near the chief warden's office. They were arrested and the university authorities were not ready to listen to them. Our local CMS unit was part of this Dalit joint action struggle.

In Tirupati, we were of the bandh demanding reinstating the topic 'history' in the junior college syllabus. In Visakhapatnam, the Andhra University Vice-Chancellor behaved in a undemocratic and fascist manner. Our local CMS unit became a part of 17 organisations' united front and fought against his fascist rule by conducting strikes, public meetings and bandh.

In Hyderabad Osmania University campus, ABVP goons broke the heads and injured the dalit students. The united front with different Dalit, left and women's movement did a dharna before the Ambedkar's statue.

In Hyderabad Osmania University campus, due food poison 60 girl students were hospitalized. After a month's gap, 10 students were hospitalized due the same problem. Our local CMS team was part of the movement to question the irresponsible attitude of the hostel admistration. We were also part of sanitation worker's pay hike movement.

In Guntur, Nagarjuna University, One B.Arch student named Rishitheswari committed suicide because of senior's ragging. Our local CMS team was part of the united front and participated in the round table meeting and did a pamphlet campaign against that issue. Later we conducted essay writing competition on the topic "How to abolish Ragging and measures" and "Problems in the education system and the condition students" in various hostels and women's colleges.

Student's Struggle in Separate Telangana Movement: Our women's organization played crucial role in Telangana movement. We were one among the women's joint action committee and Telangana Praja Front organization, which was set up especially for Separate Telangana movement.

In 2001, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) formed and in 2009 KCR, the now Chief Minister of Telangana state sat for relay hunger strike, but his strike was foiled by Congress. At the same moment, the OU students were lathicharged. OU students did propaganda to bring out real face of KCR through the slogan 'KCR you did not drink lemonade, but you drank the blood of the Telangana people' December 9 Chidambaram announced separate Telangana and he withdrew it. This act made the Telangana movement spread like wildfire and villages and cities. The student JAC gave a call for encirclement of assembly.

December 31st 2010, Telangana Praja Front organized a meeting in N.T.R gardens with 10,000 members and our CMS was part of it. All the prominent democratic leaders demanded the government to bring pass the Telangana Bill.

On July 7th, 2012 the student JAC conducted a huge daharna demanding the government to pass the Telangana Bill and left the unlawful cases on the students. Our CMS was of this dharna. From august 1 to 9, the democratic movements gave a call 'Quit Telangana' to all the Andhra rulers and capitalists and we were one among those voices.

On September 30th, 2012 Telangana JAC gave call for 'Million March'. We participated in a higher level in that march. Pamphlet and poster campaign was also done. The political JAC gave call for 'SAGARAHARAM' and we were part of that activity too. On December 9th, 2012 a meeting was conducted with a slogan 'to pass the Telangana Bill in Parliament'.

- Chaithanya Mahila Sangam (CMS), Telangana

Silence and Silencing, A mechanism of authoritarianism: A case of IIT- Bombay

In the last couple of years, the brutal face of university administrations has been on display in the ways they have reacted to students struggles for social justice in various campuses. Suspension of dissenting students, enforcement of their social boycott, collaboration with police to carry out crackdown and arrests on campuses, censure and issue of show cause notices to faculty – these are open forms of repression, perhaps more terrifying in their effect. But their public visibility has also allowed for a debate on the undemocratic character of university authorities and exposed their links to Brahmanical fascist forces. Besides its bare and unembellished operations, there is another technique by which authoritarianism seeks to deal with dissent or difference in our universities: silence. Generating a culture of organisational silence on campuses is an active way by which institutions deal with managing and restraining of discontent and demands. Silence here means intentionally withholding information and action which may be required to address concerns or redress grievances. How silence is deployed as a device by administration for silencing opinions and stalling student activities on campus can best be explained through the example of IIT Bombay.

IIT Bombay, like other such institutions of "excellence", is amongst the most depoliticised campuses in the country. Its elitist and exclusivist nature is shrouded by the language of meritocracy and technocracy. Caste, patriarchy, communal antagonism and state sponsored repression are considered "too political" to be discussed. Such questions are relegated to the department of Humanities and Social Sciences for academic engagement, and discouraged

within the public sphere of the campus. But what happens when such questions began to be asked? After all, disengagement with these issues does not mean they disappear or do not have deep bearing on the social life of the campus. How does the institute respond to these concerns when raised collectively or publicly? Consider the following instances,

In 2014, a B-tech Dalit student committed suicide on campus. The parents submitted a written testimony to the director which highlighted the problems their son faced in the institute due to his identity as a reserved category student. Given that the letter was also submitted to National Commission for SCs and the issue was raised in Rajya Sabha, IITB administration set up a committee to look into the concerns raised by the parents. The committee's mandate also included inquiring into the problems faced by SC and ST students. What could have been a historic intervention to expose the ways in which caste operates through institutional rules and practices, turned out to be a tokenistic measure enveloped in secrecy and kept low-key purposefully. No mail about the formation of this committee was circulated through institute webmail, despite demands by some students and faculty members to publicise the terms of the committee and invite testimonies of students. Even today, most members of IITB's academic community are unaware that such a committee had been constituted. The committee's report has also not been made public so far.

In 2016, on the last day of Mood Indigo (MI), a students' festival of IIT Bombay, a Hindutva party threatened and forced the MI student organisers to erase a mural painted on one of the walls of the student activity centre. The mural was a modern depiction of the Hindu god Hanuman which the Shiv Sena leaders asserted was a "derogatory" image that hurt Hindu religious feelings. Not only did the party get the image whitewashed, but it also managed to extract an apology letter signed by the MI team coordinators. Shocked at the blatant hooliganism by that vigilante group, concerned students and faculty members drafted a letter to the director asking for his response on what went wrong and why. Till date the administration has not replied to the letter or issued any statement on the matter. In an opinion survey conducted by the IITB students' media body, nearly 90 percent of the responding students believed that the incident was an attack on the intellectual and artistic freedom on campus. Many suggested that the administration should issue a statement and shed light on the steps taken to prevent such incidents in

future. But again, the administration chose not to respond to legitimate concerns of IITB community, thus deepening the confidence crisis on campus.

Last year, an innocuous sounding "Ancient Indian Knowledge Systems" workshop was held in the campus in the academic arena organised by a IITB professor. No mail had been circulated about the programme and no posters put inside campus. In a letter to director, students and faculty members questioned the secrecy surrounding the event and asked for some basic details about the workshop- whether permission had been secured and the names of speakers and organisers of the programme. Again, no reply from the administration. But when the media started pursuing this matter, the administration got alert and cancelled the permission to use the booked classroom (on account of the buildup of pressure, the organisers first shifted the workshop to a temple in campus and then finally moved to a venue off-campus). Students who attended the workshop came to know that the speakers included yogis, gaushala owners and propagandists who had made spurious claims about ancient Indian science in 2015 Indian Science Congress. The same professor recently invited a "cow therapist" from Jaipur for a lecture in the institute. Despite the preaching of Hindu belief systems and circulation of pseudoscientific claims in classrooms, no corrective action has been taken by the administration.

Early this year, female student complained against the practice of forceful entry and room-checking for mess utensils in girls' rooms by male members of her hostel council. She raised the issue with hostel and institute authorities. To her shock, she was verbally rebuked by them in one-to-one conversations for raising "petty" matters and giving them the colour of gender harassment. She also tried to raise the matter in an open house being held with some of the institute authorities, but was shouted at by a Dean who called it her "personal" grievance and nothing more.

These instances highlight the strategy of the administration to downplay and cultivate silence on questions that tear apart the facade of excellence and bring to light the prejudiced and discriminatory practices prevalent in the institute. It is expected that the complainants and victims will tire, breakdown and disengage. Letters are not replied to, concerns are not addressed through institute communication channels and demands by students for holding open houses where they can seek answers from authorities questions are shied away from. Such modus operandi is often successful in breaking down the spirit of

inquiry and challenge among students, particularly in absence of strong student unions and independent watchful student bodies.

Is this administrative culture of organised silence better than more direct and visible forms of repression? We believe that silence is not a sign of tolerance, but an integral part of authoritarianism. It conveys the circumvention by administration of all institutional and moral demands of accountability. Relations such as faculty-student, staff-administration, faculty administration, student –administration become increasingly hierarchical and undemocratic. For example, there are elaborate procedures for seeking academic accountability from students through biometric attendance, regular research presentations and report writing. But there are hardly any written guidelines, forget rules, for the administration to make its decision-making (and not just decisions) transparent to students. Minutes of meetings of Senate and Academic Affairs Evaluation committee are not shared with the student community even though they have a bearing on student affairs. There is a lack of sensitive and time bound complaints redressal system for students who have faced academic, gender or caste harassment in the institute.

Such kind of bureaucratic politics in absence of democratic institutional mechanisms lends itself to abuses of power. The current faculty in-charge of student affairs is known to deny or cancel permission for programs that do not agree with his political stand, without mentioning any reason whatsoever in a written manner. Keep aside the demand of increasing the representation of students in decision-making bodies of the institute (which is what many leading universities of the world are moving towards), there is administrative Interference with elected student offices on the ground that students do not have the level of maturity to manage their affairs responsibly. Independent student bodies that are known to raise uncomfortable questions are made to run around a maze of permissions for organising the smallest of programmes. By laying claim to abstract notions of authority the administrators spell out arbitrary decisions on complaints of harassment and discrimination. Public silence is accompanied by private chastisement. Students who raise uncomfortable questions are reprimanded in private conversation by institute administrators and also at times by research supervisors. Such instances leave the students in a weak position, as there is no evidence of the bullying or the pressure that they are exposed to.

The impunity enjoyed by the authorities in their relation with vulnerable students reinforces the Brahmanical character of these institutions. Struggle for justice on such campuses becomes a prolonged and tiring battle, which alienates students from taking part in seeking remedies and bringing about the much required

institutional changes. Students who do give a voice to their problems are usually prodded by supervisors and deans to seek psychiatric help, as if their distress over the state of affairs is self-created and has nothing to do with the properties of the institution itself. Students are pushed back into self imposed discipline. Such an environment becomes a breeding ground for passivity.

In present context when student voices and movements in many universities are being blatantly suppressed under the BJP-RSS-ABVP regime, soft forms of authoritarian control may appear more tolerable. But as attacks on students increase, there is no reason to assume that democratic voices in IITB will be spared. In fact, becauseIITs are regarded as symbols of national importance, stricter and complete control is being sought. By propagating a culture of silence and curtailing democratic activity on campuses, the authoritarian administrations have only created conditions for the takeover of universities by conservative and fascist forces.

***Paankhi**, IIT Bombay*

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Students For Society, Punjab University Struggles and Lessons

Students For Society, a students' organisation abbreviated as SFS, is currently working in Panjab University(PU), Chandigarh. It was formed on 28th September 2010, which is also the Birth date of Shaheed Bhagat Singh. It started during the time when Operation green hunt and its urban avatar had initiated, which coincides with the period when the impact and effect of sub prime crisis of 2008 of US had reached India. SFS works under the guiding light of its basic document namely, *Students' Proclamation. Ijlaas* or *Conference* is the highest body of SFS. SFS had its First Ijlaas in February, 2013 and recently completed the Second in March, 2017. The basic documents, *Students' Proclamation* and *Constitution* are bound to be finalised in Ijlaas. SFS, as acclaimed in its proclamation, "will mobilize students and integrate them with toiling masses to accomplish New Democratic Revolution in India."

SFS role in present PU scenario, recent major struggles in PU and lessons :

When SFS started working, the Panjab university was dominated by "*kakashahi*" i.e. feudal consumerist culture and was alien to any word called social justice. The elections were conducted between opportunistic and compromising pet organisations of PU, which were indirectly linked with various national/state political parties and PU authorities. The PU authorities had stronghold over the politics and university. The central government also started slashing funds from the University budget leading to a steep increment in financial crunch of PU over time. In such a scenario, SFS showed resistance via propagating its ideology, raising struggles and organisational building and gradually developed as an alternative to it. From then on to till date, university culture has

evolved qualitatively. Along with the attitude of opposition parties, University authorities, Police and Chandigarh administration have also changed a lot and it has become hostile. They have started taking SFS seriously and as a threat to their authority. In such a scenario, SFS fought and won major struggles recently *as that of Seema Azad* and *Fee hike struggle*.

Seema azad speaks despite her ban

SFS was organising its second open conference commemorating the 100th anniversary of Great Russian Revolution of 1917 under the slogan *"Smash the rising head of fascism"* and *"Turn students' upsurge into revolutionary tide"* on 3rd March, where Seema Azad and Prof. Jagmohan Singh were called as the main speakers for the conference. On 25th February, SFS demonstrated against the Ramjas College incident. The chaos started when ABVP protested against SFS and allegedly charged the members of SFS calling Indian army as rapists and reiterated that they will not allow Seema azad to speak. A media person at that spot called both party representatives for public debate which further ended with clash between SFS and ABVP . Despite the greater strength of ABVP, SFS responded and took Upper hand in clash. Thereafter, 6 members of both the parties were arrested. After this, the Chandigarh administration (BJP ruling) directly interfered in the matter. ABVP along with BJP President and mayor of Chandigarh submitted a memorandum to Governor to ban Seema Azad in chandigarh. Thereafter PU authorities canceled the hall allotted for the conference. ABVP on 1st March organised *Tiranga* march in PU and gave threat calls that it will use swords if needed, to prevent Seema Azad from speaking. On the prior day of the conference arrest orders were issued against Seema Azad. SFS offensively tackled the argument of ABVP and also called representatives of fraternal students organisations, *Kissan* and *Majdoor* unions, civil rights organisations and Sikh organisations to the conference and to extend support for the same. So, a form of wider united struggle was built in course. As the hall was canceled, the venue was shifted to student center tactically. Along with we also arranged some canes and other material in self defense and formed defense team to tackle, response and counter-attack in case violent clash erupts. On the conference day i.e. on 3rd March, the entry for outsiders (anyone except students and alumni of university) in PU was banned to prevent mobilisation at conference. ADC, DSP, SHO (Chd. Police) and PU authorities called all student parties and SFS President for the meeting aimed at convincing(forcing) SFS to stop the conference. The meeting ran for 3 hours where they even assured to arrange a hall for the conference if SFS cancels Seema azad from speaking. SFS stood still and undeterred. Immediately after the meeting, SFS president was

arrested. So, the conference started in the form of a protest outside VC-office with SFS defense team holding canes and red organisational flags in their hands and formed a protective cover to guard the students and fraternal organisations' representatives. Many representatives from fraternal organisations were stopped outside university gates and 49 of them were arrested. The armed police and intelligence was heavily deployed in the university.

Despite all this, nearly 27 organisational representatives addressed the conference including Prof. Jagmohan singh from AFDR(also associated with AIFRTE) and Sikh Historian Ajmer singh. After fooling guards at entry gates, police, intelligence, media persons at the venue, Seema Azad was the last speaker to address the conference in *keshki* (sardarni turban) *in disguise* and was introduced by the name *kirti* from Haryana. After a conference of 4 hours, a rally was organised in large numbers from VC-office to Students' center, where the announcement about Seema Azad's addressal was done and the crowd cheered in high spirits as the police, intelligence, PU authorities, opposition parties and ABVP-BJP-RSS members were left amused. Such was the story of this success.

Fee Hike Struggle

On 26th April, the PU senate i.e., the highest governing body of Panjab University increased the fee of students going to enroll in the session 2017-18 by a maximum of 1100% for various undergraduate and postgraduate courses. From the very first day of this decision, students and organisations from university campus as well as various affiliated colleges came up with resistance varying from protests, rallies, hunger strikes and campaigns against such a steep hike in fee. On 6th April, SFS gave a call for "class boycott" and to gather in front of VC-office to protest. This call was responded by other students and many organisations. The authorities gave blind eye to the protest and police resorted to water cannons and *lathicharge*. The students' organisation made a *Joint Students Action Committee Against Fee Hike* (JSAC) which gave a call for closure of university i.e., "university band" on 11th April. Nearly 1000-1500 students boycotted classes and reached VC-office where heavy police force was already deployed. Knowing the discontent of students, VC ran to New Delhi to avoid meet and answer. After seeing such attitude, students rushed to enter the VC-office and police resorted to brutal lathicharge straight on students heads and started water cannons. Following the water cannons and immense conflict, two girls students fainted. The students in response started stone pelting at the water cannon vehicle but stopped immediately as the cannons stopped. The students asked for ambulance but police responded with intensification

of lathis. The students in retaliation started stone pelting indiscriminately and police used water cannons, tear gas shells, sound bombs, brutal lathicharge and various rounds were fired in air too to suppress the struggle. A form of street fight started and students fought bravely and militantly against police for nearly 2 hours on the university streets. In the course of which police beat students in labs, library, classes and wherever they saw them indiscriminately on the basis of their wet clothes, resemblance to someone they saw on protest and without any justification whatsoever. In this mad fury, many students got injured. A student got shot by tear gas shell on his face and had to be admitted for surgery. Thereafter, Police arrested many students, again on the basis of no solid grounds. Some students ran to Gurudwara for safety. Police surrounded the Gurudwara and arrested more than 50 students and filed FIR against 66 students under Section 147, 148, 149, 332, 353, 186, 308 of Indian Penal code. In police custody many students were tortured physically and mentally. The students were booked under sedition as the authorities claimed that students shouted anti-state slogans during the protest but the charges were dropped later because of no evidence and immediate condemnation and ridicule of PU Authorities and Chandigarh Police by various democratic and progressive organisations to book students protesting against fee-hike as anti-state.

The movement moved forward after this as it gathered support from all across the country. A solidarity forum namely *Solidarity Committe for Panjab University and colleges' students* was formed in Chandigarh. Bar council stood in students' support. A solidarity forum namely P*unjab Sangarsh Hamayat Committee* of 41 organisations was also formed in Punjab. Hundreds of demonstrations were held in India and abroad and demanded roll back in fee hike and to withdraw cases. So, it became a countrywide issue thereafter and fee hike was highlighted as an agenda. All this created immense political pressure on government and authorities due to which students got immediate bail and authorities came to the back foot. After that opportunistic students' organisations differentiated them from JSAC and targeted SFS for stone pelting, violence and legal cases. At that time the leadership of SFS was either in jail or underground avoiding arrest under cases. A severe witch-hunt was going on against SFS members and sympathisers in the university. Heavily armed police in large numbers with horses was deployed in the university to threaten the students. VC himself and Wardens visited classes to check i-cards, attendances and stood at entry gates to spread fear psychosis among students to prevent further mobilisation. Instead of opposing this, these organisations stood with authorities and took the struggle backward and gave space to authorities to take control.

The SFS leaders got anticipatory bail on 27th April. Under the above mentioned conditions, SFS again tried to form a united forum to advance the struggle but it failed. Out of 11 organisations in JSAC, 6 major organisations left it. SFS formed the joint forum with whatever organisations were left. The agenda was taken to break the fear among students and to mount resistance on senate meeting of 7th May. To break the fear, the rally was called on 4th April from Students center to VC-residence in large numbers to develop confidence among students and to put pressure on senators for 7th May meeting and to increase mobilisation. The mobilisation plan was worked out and the rally became a success as nearly 300 students joined it despite chaotic situation and fear of police. It served its purpose as it showed that the struggle is still on and students are united. On 7th May, students sat for whole day outside Administration Block inside which the Senate meeting was going on. Not a single student moved that day from 9 am to 8:30 pm. The joint forum arranged tea and lunch for all the students sitting on protest. Due to the students consistent, militant and brave struggle, support of senators and outside organisation who stood in solidarity, Fee hike got rolled back from 1100% to 10% and Senators assured students to withdraw the FIR filed by Chief Security Officer of PU.

Now a days the issue after issue is coming at a vehement pace. So, it's impossible to resist this attack on education by fighting only one issue or few issues at a definite time & place by single or few organizations. So, only a unified student movement should overcome this terrible situation and to target this education system as a whole. SFS finds it important to develop coordination at this juncture of time by sharing experiences, building solidarity and developing strategies through united forum of wider democratic and progressive organizations, which will provide momentum to the student movement. SFS finds the unified student movement a way to put the state under pressure, to resist the onslaught on Education. This will also fulfill the vacuum and will narrow down the space for the reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries.

- Students For Society
Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Cultures of Protest and Violence at Ramjas College, University of Delhi

The English department of Ramjas College, University of Delhi and Wordcraft, its literary society, first conceptualised "Cultures of Protest: A Seminar Exploring Representations of Dissent" in October 2016. The organising committee for the event, a team of over 20 members of which I was a part, comprised undergraduate students and faculty members who were eager to explore and engage with the idea of dissent. During the several meetings that the organising committee held over five months, we carefully chose the names of the speakers we would invite, and zealously debated the issues we would cover. These included, but were not restricted to: resistance movements in academic spaces; the political expression of marginalised communities; and the state's role in conflict regions. Our meetings would elbow their way into our classes and our afternoon sessions would often stretch into late evenings. The seminar, which was slated for 21 and 22 February 2017, consisted of eight panels and close to two dozen speakers. Through the event, we hoped to understand the modes of protest that were employed to articulate political resistance. We planned feverishly, determined to host a seminar that would spur critical thinking and conversations on the subjects we were highlighting. Unfortunately, the event never reached its logical conclusion. The seminar, which was meant to be a discourse on dissent, became a site at which we were forced to defend the right to dissent instead. Ostensibly, it was the inclusion of students from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Shehla Rashid Shora and Umar Khalid, who was charged with sedition along with Kanhaiya Kumar, in February 2016, for allegedly raising anti-national slogans, in two panels that seemed to have triggered the neo-nationalists. Their wrath led to the cancellation

of the seminar and culminated in the violence by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of RSS, that ignominiously hurtled the college and Delhi University (DU) into a vortex of controversy.

The wrath however was not a simple disagreement to the principles, ideas and politics of the two speakers, or the seminar, in a democratic fashion. It was a brute, animalistic display of hyper-masculinity that represented itself through massive violence. The seminar was opposed by stones, rods and jingoistic slogans, name-calling, at the end of which the students of university were left massively wounded, both literally and metaphorically. The violence that occurred in the over two days inside the University campus, inevitably, eroded all ethos and values of the university in front of the administration and state mechanism, as the police stood in abject silence as the pillars of free speech were being decimated by the ABVP.

To reduce that what happened in Ramjas College, especially the violence, to an isolated event would be a travesty of truth, it would be about turning a blind eye to the world outside the university. A University is inside the larger society, it cannot be separated from the materiality of where it exists. There are greater forces at play, and there is a pattern to this violence, in India, today. In many ways, the roots of this can be traced to the uprising of a Hindu State in 2014. A rise of a Government that came up with a new idea of nationhood based on the values of the Hindu religion. A government that came up to pit itself against the rationality of human mind, against the idea of critical thinking and laid its foundation by silencing the oppositions—killing, buying and decimating, them.

More importantly, in a bid to kill university spaces, to the Sangh Parivar, the word critical thinking is abhorrent as it conjures up the ghost of secession, and the only desirable way to quell such an abominable assertion is to respond with exemplary violence, and if need be, by slapping laws of sedition. In their limited and diminished imagination, critical thinking and nationalism are antithetical. Critical Thinking has resonated on campuses, like it must, in all universities, from FIIT, Hyderabad, Jadhavpur, and beyond, to the deep recesses of civil society, in the ordinary struggles of people against exploitation, injustice and repression. So, any discussion of Cultures of Protest will inevitably be met with Cultures of Violence.

The Ramjas episode, which actually is about the freedom of speech and the right to dissent, has been recast into a debate on nationalism by the ABVP. A concerted attempt is being made to establish the legitimacy of violence by taking

the refuge of nationalism. The pedestrian argument, which is being replicated everywhere by their spokespersons, is that when nationalistic fervour is aroused, when patriots are provoked by the mere possibility of hearing something that might in some likelihood eventually turn out to be what they could deem unilaterally in their wisdom as anti-national. The resort to violence to punish potential traitors is painted as desirable and perhaps moral. Even more sinister is the second argument that the mere presence of any person, Umar Khalid in this case, who has been certified as an 'anti-national' in their kangaroo courts with the partisan media cheering on, is to be dismissed by using force, by threatening violence. Violence in the service of this misguided idea of nationalism is sought to be exalted as moral, purifying, necessary for the purging of pollutants, and irritants, and no wonder, according to reports, the Sangh plans to engage the most expensive lawyers in the defense of those accused in the Ramjas violence, should there be a farce of a trail to satisfy the pangs of guilt that moderates may have, or should such a need arise in case they run into an obdurate judiciary. Violence, or incitement to violence, is not just normalised, it is also moralised, and even rewarded in many cases by the Sangh Parivar, if only by some contrivance it could be argued that it was done in the service of Bharat Mata, either in the nondescript town of Dadri, or in the rich cities of Gujarat, in campuses across the country, or now in Ramjas.

To my mind, the defense of this blow on Ramjas has been a massive exercise. The movement was able to politicise the campus, and roped in the "apolitical" students, united the campus against the violence that was perpetrated by the ABVP. The University space was never so political, as it has turned out to be, in the course of the year. I believe, the first step towards a radical change and a favorable defense can occur only when there is apolitical education for the students. I do understand that our Freedom of Speech has been snatched from us, yet, we cannot defend India's universities against this orchestrated onslaught by merely making an argument only for the defense of free speech. The issue at hand is much broader as it involves a siege on the foundational values that India's body politic was built on. This defense has to be inevitably political, and it must respond to the debate on nationalism, the rule of law and democracy; it is, as it were, the very idea of India is being held hostage to a rising tide of political violence, and it needs a thorough reiteration, a passionate reaffirmation.

The Sangh Parivar disappoints in its puerile imagination of nationalism. The dumbing down of a whole cosmos of ideas—replete with countless ways of being and existing, and infinitely rich and complex in modes of thought—into a poor, sparse, unhospitable, exclusivist, repulsive and violent mode of irrational

nationalism, shamelessly borrowed from the worst nightmares of the west, is the greatest disservice that anyone could have done to Bharat Mata! They have learn nothing from our essentially variegated culture, its much-vaunted tradition of tolerance, from its truly glorious history of accommodation, and from its remarkable celebration of dissent. To be able to merely extract Cow, Ram and Capitalism from this endless ocean of possibilities is a monument to their intellectual poverty.

In ancient India, as is well documented, the practice ofshastrartha (debate) settled theological differences. The Buddhist philosophical tradition is one of criticality and rationality, but also of skepticism. In medieval India, the Bhakti and Sufi movements were expressions and imaginations constitutively directed against the monopolies of truth, and the determinisms of religion. Our knowledge systems have always been informed by a pluralist epistemology sheltering reason, unreason, irrationalism, experience, intuition and spiritualism together in a magnificent marquee of achievements. In India, the construction of truth has always been many-sided, and there have been multiple ways leading to it. Dissenters were not only tolerated but also accorded an equal status. The substance of our being, the bedrock of our ontology, indisputably, has been pluralism and to put it in a word that still resonates in all of us diversity. This idea of India needs to be salvaged from the mutilation that awaits it.

Abinash Dash Choudhary,

Ramjas College Literary Society, University of Delhi.

Hokkolorob Movement in Jadavpur University and Hok Protibad in Burdwan University

"I was alive when more than one lakh students marched their way for #hokkolorob" – the line became undoubtedly the slogan of the time of the phenomenal 'hokkolorob movement' which started out in Jadavpur university. The night of 16th September set on motion something pent up in the students of 1st generation of neo-liberal education system.

Since 1980s paws of neo-liberalism started to mark its reign in India and today almost the entire education sector of our country is on the brink of privatisation. Education is increasingly becoming a market product and a buyable commodity in the mentality of the masses. Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR), Public Private Partnerships (PPP) are readily replacing government funding in research institutions making those the R&D hub for the MNCs. The Right to Education of common people is in the hands of some dying Government aided primary schools, fund-lacking college-universities. On the other hand shopping malls of school - college degrees are building high rises in the name of development of educational opportunities in developing India. To aid students to participate in the rat race for a few prestigious govt. institutions or jobs, coaching institutes are budding everywhere. These institutes with a sole purpose of surplus generation with no responsibility towards the students are creating the reserve army of jobless workers. In West Bengal the first private engineering college came to existence holding the hands of the very CPI(M) government and the scenario is ever worsening even after the change of the political powers. This attack of privatisation on education sustains on the choking of democratic spaces and voices of dissent from the sufferers of this neo liberal education system.

The incident

It all started with an incidence of molestation of a student on the night of 28th August during the cultural fest of arts faculty. The accused were some members of the new block hostel inside the campus. When the victim went to the VC asking a just inquiry, the VC didn't listen to her at all and the girl had to lodge a FIR on 1st September at Jadavpur Police Station against 11 students. Soon the internal Complaint Committee of the university started its own investigation and two members of the committee went to the girl's home to ask her some questions without notifying other members. Later the members claimed this venture as an attempt to stand with the student on the face of the harassment, though a complaint lodged by the victim on that very day in Bidhannagar Police Station says a different story, the story of another harassment which starts after the actual incident - the eternal question on the length of the clothes she wore, the amount of alcohol in her blood or the kind of company she had etc. When the students came to know about this misconduct they raised their voice to reconstruct the ICC committee according to the 'Vishakha' guidelines. The VC showed a nonchalant attitude to the demand and students started sit in demonstration at the administrative building on 10th September. The VC called an Executive committee meeting on 16th September, but this case of sexual harassment was not even in the agenda. Students, exhausted and disappointed after a 6 day long sit in demonstration, decided to gherao the VC along with the Executive Committee on that night. More than 400 students participated in that move. Since 9 o' clock that night campus started to get surrounded by uniformed and non-uniformed police forces. Finally after few minutes passed 2 AM on VC's command the force started to beat their way inside the administrative building to 'recover' the revered Vice Chancellor, they detained 37 of us, 33 students were hospitalized and on a quest for gender justice of a fellow student, many students got molested and harassed by the state sponsored goons on that unforgettable night.

Jadavpur witnessed a rally of almost 5000 students on the very next day. The day after the number escalated to 12000, and finally on 20th September the city of joy witnessed a never seen mass of nearly 1 lakh students and general people marching towards Rajbhaban asking for justice shouting 'hok hok hok kolorob'.

Venting the Pent Up Voices

Since the 'outbreak' of neo-liberal economy and educational policies we are observing a phase of relative silence of dissenting voices, a phase lacking movements on democratic or educational demands of the student community.

Neo-liberalism's philosophy of competition is increasingly creating self centred, careerist 'individual's who thinks politics as a taboo or waste of time, a generation driven by Internet, social media, Smart phone which hardly cares about a slum eviction happening few blocks away. A generation, which is learning that everything is a product, you have to buy everything from water to a B.Tech degree, is made to cheap labours by the mushrooming private institutes. No proper infrastructure, no placement, no existence of a student union to unite the voices to protest was creating a rage the student community didn't know how or where to express. The rally of 20th September gave them the space to vent their dissatisfaction towards the system, they sang their nonsense verses, the performed street plays, the wrote their mind off on the walls the content of their slogans. Songs might not be at par with the conventional radical ways taught by 70s or 80s movements, but the spontaneity that we observed was overwhelming. Who called all those unknown faces to the rally? No one did. In the age of neo-liberalism where all the free 'space's are increasingly getting encroached, the social media is giving all these voices a 'virtual space' a territory of their own and the calls coming from this territory which is let's say an event-invite touched the right cord at the right moment. Secondly, the question of sexual harassment, which got into light and faced a great mass upsurge with the incident of 'Nirbhaya', park-street rape, kamduni and many more, created a mass-awareness on the points of patriarchy and gender justice and that played a crucial role in including a large section of student into the axis of the movement which started off with the demand of gender justice. Thirdly, another phenomenon we observed is the renouncement of the established giant political parties who systematically failed the student and youth section. A notion was prevalent that there is something wrong with these reformist political parties who are unable to carry the latent zeal of the student-youth section to uproot this neo-liberal system. Needless to say, the reign of hooliganism practiced and established by the 34 year long left front government and presently ruling Trinamool Congress alike kept creating a huge rage against common students of Bengal. The hokkolorob rally showed them or gave the vision of the united strength of the common students if rallied together – that also was a root cause of such a huge participation. Students from various colleges under Calcutta University was attacked, threatened to prevent them from joining the rally, but neither the threat nor the heavy pouring of 20th September could stop them from claiming their chance to raise the voice, from claiming their 'space'.

After the great rally, students kept organising token hunger strike and continuous protest demonstrations through mass convention, rallies street corners. The government tried to choke the voice through putting police picketing outside

the university gate to keep the trouble making 'outsider's away. They tried to restrict the entry through Id-cards. But the students didn't rest or get tired. A referendum was organised and 95% of the students voted for VC's resignation. Students refused medals and degrees from the Governor boycotting the annual convocation. Finally we resorted to infinite hunger strike and after one week and two hospitalized students the CM Mamata Banerjee was compelled to come to the university to announce VC Abhijit Chakrabarty's decision to resign. We won, won all the students who tried to claim their rights, their spaces with the help and inspiration from hokkolorob, soon we observed similar movements budding in different places in west Bengal. Students of Burdwan University voiced against infrastructural problems, SSC qualified teachers with job letters but no job - came together to protest. Hokkolorob gave us the sign that the oppression of neo-liberalism is almost touching the edge, the people who were least empathic about their fellow colleagues are coming together with a singular demand, and the politics-phobic students are starting to rally together with their demands. It is our duty of the time to contain and understand these sporadic movements to spearhead our attack against commodification of education, neo-liberal policies

Protests at Burdwan university inspired from hokkolorob

Burdwan university is one of the important govt. public university of West Bengal under which there are about 185 colleges. In 2015, a movement erupted by the common students of the university as an outburst after severe mismanagement regarding the UG and PG result publication. They organized the movement under the common banner of 'Hok protibad' (Let's Protest). After the success of Hok Kolorob, there was already a stir in the student community of West Bengal After a long time the spontaneous eruption of 'Hok Protibad' movement was nothing but continuity of the belief in fighting spirit which was regained by 'Hok kolorob' movement. Even when we reached there, the students cheered and accepted cordially us as representatives of hok kolorob pole(hok kolorob was yet not a pole though). The movement was one of its kind as there was no history of such movement not under a banner of popular political parties outside Kolkata in recent past and those who participated, organized enthusiastically were never been in even a rally before this movement. One more thing to point out, the participation of female students was exceptionally well, which was not much a nature of even Hok Kolorob. Authority tried to thrash the movement by same known ways- threats, hooliganism by the Trinamool Congress goons, ignoring the demands deliberately. The demands were simple and just i.e. to publish the results in time and to make arrangements for correction of the misprinted, mis

evaluated, even not printed mark sheets of most of the university students. But the limitation of the movement was that even after such an overwhelming response from the common students it failed to continue as a spirit. We, as a conscious force present there, tried mostly to intervene giving technically feasible and politically optimum suggestions obviously to make the movement a successful one and to create a sphere of 'independent student politics' which rather banks upon the spirit of fighting for right, and doesn't come under influence of any of the ruling party, which was unimaginable in those non elite, semi urban campuses where politics is essentially defined by intermediation of ruling party, hooliganism, corruption etc. Trinamool Congress bashed down the movement intervening hugely, beat up the students, members of our organization were also beaten up. Local Trinamool Congress leaders went to the girls hostels, PGs and threatened the students not to join any activity under Hok Protibad. Such huge bashing resulted in fear and helplessness. The movement though having a huge potential could not achieve its demands but paved a way for an imagination which can show up again and organize a huge number of common students as corruption regarding publication of results is a regular phenomenon in Burdwan University.

- Progressive Democratic Students Front, (PDSF), West Bengal.

We Miss you Rohith

After Rohith death, How things have changed for them over the past year. Outlining how all of them have cried themselves hoarse, demanding justice and equality, there is a sense that they are disheartened, but still remain resolute in their demands.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 03/01/2017 honored and awarded Podile Apparao, a Plagiarist, Sub-Standard Scholar and a criminal accused under SC/ ST Prevention of Atrocities Act with "Millenium Plaque of Honour" at the Indian National Science Congress event held at Tirupathi amidst the presence of Andhra Pradesh chief minister Nara Chandra Babu Naidu and Y.S.Chowdary who were none other than strong lobbyists for Apparao Podile. In Post-Rohith Vemula's Socio-Politico-Institutional Murder on January 17, 2016 and the subsequent Dalit-Bahujan Uprising across the country gave birth to many stooges who helped in suppressing the movement. Apparao Podile is one such stooge who is now being rewarded for the services to his masters in BJP. Let's not forget that this man was chosen out of turn and by overlooking several eminent scholars. This was done by the Government clearly to suppress Dalit Student Assertions on the campus. It was only after Apparao took charge that things on the campus went on to precipitate. This has been a trend of Modi Government, appointing people out of turn and promoting stooges is nothing new to the BJP.

A year after his death, Dontha Prashanth, Seshaiah Chemudugunta, Vijay Pedapudi and Sunkanna Velpula, the four students who were suspended with Rohith expressed their feeling.

Dontha Prashanth

I don't think we are any closer to justice than we were a year ago. The battle is longer, and we have to fight it out. Rohith was a spirited and committed Ambedkarite. He would write on every issue that was close to his heart, and he had no inhibitions about making his opinions public. I miss those days of the struggle when we fought together, organizing protests, speaking out, and always standing up for what we felt was right. It has not been a smooth year for us. We have been fighting against big people, heading ministries and institutions, who have complete government backing.

However, there are two sides to it. On one hand, our biggest hope was that 2016 witnessed a major awakening of Dalits. We came to the streets and fought for rights, despite countless accounts of backlash from the state and certain sections of the public. The concern for individual rights has clearly grown among the youth, and they showed that they will fight their own battle. On the other hand, we experienced injustice in its worst form, while battling harassment and discrimination. Even though the general public is with us, we have a tough time because we have taken on people in power, from the university administration to the government. One thing has become clear to me as far as how these things work out. Look at the machinery involved. A person gets instituted by the BJP. When his authority is questioned, he gets support from union ministers to the Prime Minister. A case is filed against him, but still it makes no headway, clearly because there is pressure on the police. In return, there are four or five cases slapped on the people who are fighting. They think that they can bring down our morale through this, but given the ultimate sacrifice that one has seen through Rohith, we will not stop fighting. When people in remote villages can organise and fight against caste oppression, we, being in institutions of education have to speak up on the issue. As far as justice is concerned, as Ambedkarites, we believe in constitutional methods. Those methods can only be implemented when people who believe in those same values, govern. With the institution led by casteist individuals and the country being headed by a person like Narendra Modi, there is not much hope. There is also constant state repression. Despite all this, we won't step back from our fight and will continue our struggle for justice.

Seshaiah Chemudugunta

Not much has changed over the past year. The one good takeaway, is that the Ambedkar movement has spread across the nation following Rohith's death. I miss Rohith's intellectualism the most, especially his writings. I loved the things

that he wrote and the way he criticised several things from the caste system to certain ideologies in society. On a personal level, I miss the days when we all used to gather together in a room to eat beef, mutton and chicken biryani. We used to do it at least two or three times a week. After his death, those meals are not the same anymore. I have no hopes of justice presently, especially from an administration that considers his killer a 'science genius', and awards him for it. The legal system also seems to be failing us, as the police are not taking the case forward citing some reason or the other, while it seems like a clear case of pressure from the top. Rohith became a symbol of discrimination, but the root cause is far from solved. There are still many people like him, fighting the system and fighting injustice, and until that issue is addressed, our fight is far from over.

Sunkanna Velpula

When Rohith died, a mother lost her son, on whom she had her hopes and future aspirations pinned. We on the other hand, lost a true friend and a real Ambedkarite. A face like Rohith's was lacking for the Dalit community, and his death really brought out one of the biggest Dalit movements since the independence of India. However, I'm personally disheartened as nothing happened. We could not even shake the government. The entire system, whether it is the law, the police or the state, I realized that we can't even scratch the surface. There have been many incidents of injustice to Dalits in the past across the country and also in Andhra Pradesh. In most of these cases, later justice is denied. We are suffering the same fate. We put a lot of effort, and put everything aside in the fight for justice, but there has been no change. There is only one reason for this, and that's because caste is political. When the BJP and other political parties talk about the Dalits, and take sides or a particular stand, they're only looking at them like a voter base. As long as this mindset remains among the parties, of treating minorities purely as voters, there can be no real change that we can witness. However, we will continue our struggle and continue to fight. We have no other option but to fight.

Vijay Pedupudi

What I miss most about Rohith, is the ideology that he portrayed and his enthusiasm for everything and every topic. People like him are much needed today for the Dalit society. We ourselves have been fighting with the inspiration

that Rohith gave us, and what he stood for has become a common cause for many of us today. I only wish that Rohith was with us today, to fight with us, along our side, but unfortunately he has left us and gone. I don't even see an inkling of hope that we will get justice. The Centre is not ready to punish anyone involved in the case. Instead, it goes one step further to actually award the accused. It is an act that disrespects the constitution of this country. There is only one message that such an act gives out. It is that the ruling government is not going to hear your voice and just wants dissenters to shut up. I don't even have hope on the judiciary and the police, because the state government is also not taking any further action. The case is not even coming up for hearing in the High Court. However, we are fighting with hope, and our goal is to take the movement further, so it reaches the minds of the people and finally the government, which is when real change will happen.

- From the Joint Action Committee for Social Justice UoH's face book page: https://www.facebook.com/notes/joint-action-committee-for-social-justice-uoh/we-miss-you-rohith/610226999163256

The Fight of Progressive and Democratic Student Community (PDSC) for Justice

"For a successful revolution it is not enough that there is discontent. What is required is a profound and thorough conviction of the justice, necessity and importance of political and social rights"

- Dr. Ambedkar

From the survey conducted by PDSC based on language, it clearly comes out that 70.5 % of the students comes from the schools with fee more than Rs 1000 whereas a total of 53.8% students comes from highly expensive schools (with a fee of Rs 2000 or more), only 12.4% students (adding general category) comes from schools that charges fee of Rs 0-200 per month. From Schedule Castes (SC) community, 43.90% students come from the schools that charges fees of Rs 0-200 per month. Among OBC and ST category, this figure is 14.5% and 18.1% respectively. Among the general category students, this figure is as low as 7%. These figures clearly highlight the fact that most of the students coming to Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) are of upper caste and are of upper class. The students belonging to the upper class and upper caste have hegemony over academic and cultural spaces of Campus.

The above mentioned note clearly reveals the fact that in higher education, a large number of people are kept out of system. This is the group that lives in slums or in backward areas; most of the people living in these areas are from Dalit community, Muslims or are from other backward castes. Among these houses the decision whether their child should or should not go to school depends on

the fact if they have some surplus income after their living and eating expense are met. The child from these areas go to the government schools and majority of them have to read in Hindi (this is the condition in Delhi and Northern Indian Hindi speaking states) or Regional Language Medium schools. The people from these communities think that it would be a great help to their homes if their children can get job after passing 12th class to help their respective families. For these students the graduation and studying beyond is a distant dream.

Social justice is a crucial and necessary subject for a society where discrimination on the basis of caste, gender, class, religion, and Varna is entrenched at every level. Such discrimination enables the continuation of social, economic and cultural advantages to a smaller proportion of society that is upper class, upper caste, male dominated but at the same time ensures that a major section of the society that is working class and poor remains oppressed. We can also find this reflected in our university, Ambedkar University. The attempt of the Progressive and Democratic Student Collective (PDSC) through its efforts and ground level work is to bring out the nature and various forms of this discrimination, injustice and oppression and to enable discussion around them so as to collectivise in our resistance against them.

Last semester we attempted to highlight how problems in basic English language skills have roots in class, gender and caste locations of the students. Our survey report brought out how upper classes and upper castes dominate the academic classroom and seminars etc in this campus. Similarly, through this statement our effort is to reach out to the student community with the necessary information which highlights the fact that our university has actually been controlled by dominant caste and class groups over the years and their dominance continues to hold even now. Having this information and understanding its implications are extremely important to advance the struggles of students from marginalized caste and class backgrounds, so that the PDSC's efforts to advance the struggle for social justice can gain momentum. The responsibility of running a university lies with the academic and teaching staff as well as the students. In our university as well many important decisions relating to academic matters are taken by the Academic Council but the question is do we as students know about the academic structures of our university? Caste and class are discussed intensively in our classrooms through Dr. Ambedkar's and Marx's works, but isn't it important to look at the caste-based nature of the academic structures of our university? There are some fundamental and important steps that all government institutions need to take up according to our Indian Constitution like Reservations- whether our university has been able to fulfill such measures? In order to develop an

understanding of these issues, and to bring this information to students from marginalised caste and class backgrounds as well as democratic-progressive students, the PDSC has collected information through an RTI, which is being shared here.

In our university, a total of 110 people are employed in permanent academic positions. Of these 110, 19 are professors, 18 are associate professors and 73 are assistant professors. It is a cruel irony that none of the professor and associate professor positions are occupied by Dalits, OBCs and Adivasis. These facts bring out the casteist character of a university that is not only functioning in the name of Babasaheb but also claims to follow the constitutional principles formulated by him. On the other hand, it is a significant and shocking fact that the Academic Council consists of five professors nominated by the Vice Chancellor and the Deans of all the Schools. There is only one representative nominated by the Vice Chancellor for the assistant and associate professor categories each. Thus it is clear that the Academic Council is almost entirely dominated by Savarna academic employees.

There is no provision for student representatives in the Academic Council either. The council for taking decisions on academic matters does not have any representation from students, especially from poor, Dalit, Bahujan and Adivasi students. As a result, issues faced by students from poverty-ridden, Dalit and socially marginalized backgrounds remain silenced, whether these have to do with resisting the dominance of any one language, or that of protesting high fees that denies them access to college education, or be it of raising questions about the nature of subjects and the kind of schools required in the university. If we now look at the number of assistant professors employed by the university, merely 9 out of 73 are Dalit (SC) which comes to a mere 12.3%. This is even lower than the minimum reservation requirement of 15 % seats for Dalits stipulated by the Government of India as well as the Delhi government. The number of assistant professors from the Adivasi (ST) category is 6, i.e. 8.2% (government reservation is 7.5%). The most deplorable fact is that no OBC has been appointed in the teaching posts. (The language survey report had brought out that basic English skills remained a problem for all (100%) the OBC students educated in schools charging minimal fees between Rs.0-2000). Among the non-academic staff, a mere 11 are permanent employees and further all 11 are upper caste as there are no Dalit, OBCs or Adivasi employees in this group. But when we look at the temporary nonacademic staff, we find that out of a total of 109 there are 13 Dalits and 12 from OBC but there are no Adivasis.

The complete absence of OBCs in the assistant professor posts raises questions about the appointment procedures of the university. Is it that appointments are taking place entirely in the general category? The question becomes even more complex when we look at the figures for ad-hoc teachers- out of 44 ad-hoc teachers only 2 are Dalit and 2 belong to OBC. Questions then arise about these procedures of appointment where either the minimum reservations for Dalits, OBCs and Adivasis are not being met or they are completely absent. We also need to investigate how many ad-hoc teaching positions have been advertised in the past 2-3 years? What are the provisions for reservations in this process?. We believe that the operations of this university are ridden with class and caste discrimination. Reservations are not being implemented properly. And if appointments to these positions continue in this manner which reinforces the dominance of powerful sections of society, then can those of us coming from marginalised social sections, and still facing marginalisation on account of poverty and long histories of social oppression ever imagine a future in the academic and non-academic positions of this university? Will we ever be able to share our thoughts, our ideas, the needs of our social groups and their cultures through this university? Why is it that, even after the independence of 1947, certain social groups continue to exert their dominance in the face of teachers? Why is it that all renowned intellectuals emerge from the same social class and upper caste groups? Why are the rest missing?

It is on raising these issues and associated questions that 11 students of Jawaharlal Nehru University(JNU) were recently suspended by the administration because they wanted to take up these concerns with the Academic Council. The PDSC stands with them in this struggle for social justice. We also remain committed to intensifying the struggle for social justice within AUD.

- Progressive and Democratic Student Community (PDSC)

Karnataka Vidyarthi Sanghatane's Experiences of Struggles in Karnataka[1]

Karnataka Vidyarthi Sanghatane,KVS was formed in January 2010 by bringing together various pro-people student organizations which were functioning for decades at district level under different names. Organisations such as Vidhyarthi Hitharakshana Vedike of Shivamogga, Jagruthi Vidhyarthi Okkuta of Mandya, Janapara Vidhyarthi Sanghatane of Davangere etc., which belonged to a similar ideological stream came together to form KVS. KVS has conducted huge struggles for improvement in hostel facilities, for enhancement of monthly stipend to students, for a good educational environment etc., In the initial years the struggles were conducted through the united forum of Karnataka hostel students.

Then the epoch of closure of Government schools in Karnataka began. In 2011 the then BJP government in Karnataka passed an order for closure of more than 3000 government schools. This was a huge ploy to kill the public education system. KVS took up a big propaganda campaign against this. Campaign was done in buses, trains, slums etc., to persuade the public about the importance of government schools. Protests were held in several districts. When the government did not heed to these, on November 1st 2011 when the government was holding a programme to commemorate the statehood day of Karnataka a huge protest was organized in the venue itself with the slogan 'The government that has been shutting down the Kannada schools have no moral right to celebrate Kannada statehood'. There was a lathi charge on the protesters and 19 members of KVS and KJS were taken into custody and jailed for 2 days.

[1] *Translated from Kannada.*

In 2012 KVS became a member organization of AIFRTE and also joined the forum 'People's movement for Common Education' in Karnataka. From then on KVS has been actively involved in propaganda and struggle demanding the strengthening of the public schooling system and controlling the commercialisation of private education. KVS participated in the AIFRTE conference held in Chennai during June- July 2012. Simultaneously realizing the absolute need for recruitment of teachers, if public education has to be strengthened, a struggle was initiated demanding 'Recruitment of one teacher for each class and one teacher for each subject'. For this a forum of Karnataka State D.Ed, B.Ed. graduates was organized and protests/ struggles were held in every district.

In 2013 the then government all of sudden stopped the fee reimbursement to the students of backward classes. Because of the hike in admission and exam fees resulting from it the students had to face severe problems. This was snatching away of the constitutional rights of the students and a pro privatisation ploy. A huge struggle against this was taken up by KVS. Everywhere college bandh was done and widespread propaganda movement was taken up. Along with district level protests a gheroe of the office of department of backward classes in Bangalore was held. As a result of this struggle the government rescinded the order stopping the reimbursement of fees to backward classes students. The call for 'All India Common Education Jatha' given by AIFRTE opposing commercialization of Education and implementation of common schooling policy was successfully conducted in Karnataka too. There was a full-fledged participation of KVS in this. KVS was not only involved in the jatha programmes in the districts of Mysore, Mandya, Ramanagar, Bangalore, Kolar, Chikkaballapura, Udupi, Dharwad, Bellary etc., but also more than 100 KVS students participated in the Bhopal Conference held as a finale of this jatha.

Along with several of these struggles KVS has been involved in a few constructive activities too. Importantly it has joined hands with Samana Sikshanakkagi Janandolana in the campaign to save government schools, in the formation of old students associations by bringing old students of government schools, in organizing the local community to develop their local government school in future by uniting the school SDMC members, teachers and parents are the most important of these activities. The task of strengthening the public education system is being taken up by starting children's home (LKG, UKG) classes, allotting additional teachers, creating a good learning environment, starting smart classes etc., thereby aiding the increase in the enrollment rate to government schools. Thus in Karnataka the movement to save government schools has taken been up by KVS with a two pronged approach. One is to build wide spread struggle and the other is to take independent initiative in all round development of government schools. KVS took up several struggles against

the sexual harassment and rape of women and children in Karnataka. KVS has raised its voice for women's rights by participating in the 'People's movement against sexual violence Jatha' which took place all over the state.

In 2015 a series of farmer suicides began due to the government apathy towards agricultural sector and the resultant increase and spread of the agrarian crisis. Mandya district recorded the highest number of suicides in that period. Governments stopped at just issuing advertisements asking farmers not to commit suicides. In this distress situation KJS undertook a Farmer struggle Jatha in Mandya district. KVS was actively involved in this struggle Jatha. More than 75 students in two stages participated in the Jatha for more than 25 days and campaigned in more than 900 villages propagating the fact that 'government and its policies are the root cause for agrarian crisis, the solution is in united struggle and not suicide'. The confidence and resolve to struggle for their rights was increased in the people through street plays, songs, direct discussions and house to house visit. At the end of the Jatha more than 4000 people converged at the Mandya DC office and gave vent to their anger. KVS displayed its initiate to stand with the people in this manner.

At the same time KVS built a popular opposition to the central government signing of the WTO- GATT treaty. Opposing GATT , which paves way free opportunity to commercialization of education, several seminars, protests were held. In the 10 days long continuous protest conducted by AIFTRE, KVS contingent of more than 100 students participated for 3 days.

In 2016 January, when the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula took place KVS organized protests in various places throughout the state including the one in front of Bangalore University. KVS was involved in the programme on Rohith Vemula issue organized jointly by all the students organisations More importantly exactly a month after the death of Rohith Vemula a state level programme opposing oppression in campuses and demanding campus democracy was held inviting the associates of Rohith Vemula the leaders of ASA, JNU, Pune's FTTI, Chennai's Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle was held. When the prolonged months long struggle was going on in HCU, KVs representatives visited HCU and participated in the struggle as a mark of solidarity. Also when JNU leaders Kanhaiya Kumar and his comrades were in jail a day long fasting sathyagraha was held supporting their struggle.

In 2016 as part of the constructive activity a unique propaganda campaign by the name ' Say Yes' campaign was taken up by KVS. The goal of this campaign was to involve the students and youth in nation building through working for common education, strong sustainable agriculture and superior environment. Campaign was conducted in more than 100 colleges and hostels. Through this students

and youth were involved in the nation building activity. Through this campaign KVS could get in touch with thousands of students. On September 27th 2016 on Bhagat Singh's birth anniversary a 'Say Yes' conference was held in which more than 500 students participated. Since then KVS is completely involved in struggles of the people's movements, united forums and organisations for the common people's rights and helping them in taking forward this struggle. As a response to the barbarous torture of the Dalits in Una, in Karnataka too Dalit resistance erupted in the form of Udupi Chalo. The movement which started with the slogan 'Food is our choice. Land is our right' spread throughout Karnataka and the country just in a matter of few days. In the movement which happened from October 4th to October 9th more than 40 members of KVS participated as volunteers. Udupi Chalo programme was not only a grand success it had a vast influence. Even later KVS was completely involved in the Tumkur Chalo programme in response to the injustice to a Dalit youth in Gubbi, in the Gudibande Chalo programme against the killing of a young Dalit boy, in the people's rights day commemorateing birth anniversary of Ambedkar etc.,

After this 'The struggle committee for land and shelter deprived' once again brought the land question to the forefront. Struggle was started demanding land to work on and earn a living and a site for having a shelter. A huge struggle took place on the 100th anniversary day of Devaraja Urs. KVS was involved in this struggle. KVS participated even in the sathyagraha which took place in Belgaum during the assembly session there. When 577 families of tribals in Diddahalli were forcibly evicted KVS immediately jumped into the fray. KVS stood in the support of the affected people all through their six months of struggle.

In Karnataka for the past 5 years all progressive and women's organizations have joined hands under the banner of all Karnataka forum against atrocity on women have been celebrating International Women's Day in a grand manner. In all these yearly Women's Day celebrations held in Mangalore, Mysore, Bangalore, Vijayapura and Koppala KVS has very actively participated and served as volunteers in all these events. In the situation when all the three major political parties in Karnataka have become extremely corrupt, casteist and anti-people a movement has begun with peoples interest in mind to form a peoples alternative. This being a movement for alternative politics KVS is involved in it too.

- Karnataka Vidyarthi Sanghatane,
KVS, Karnataka

Democratic Student's Association's struggles in Kerala

Before coming out as an organization named Democratic Student's Association, DSA, we had been a magazine and a loose collective around it, named Padantharam. About a couple of months after we started our magazine, we ran into our first struggle in Maharajas College, Ernakulam. The college was on strike, one that was build up into after months of campaigning, against the granting of the much hyped and glorified Autonomy status to the Maharajas College, Ernakulam. Autonomy seems like a very positive and progressive word, and generally sounds like something an institution ought to have, but this particular scenario is different. It had always been a guise, an initial step of many, that would commodify and privatise education. It is nothing but a part of the Imperial WTO agenda that demands education be given to it on a platter, ready to be exploited by the "free" market. Autonomy would then lead to a gradual withdrawal of the state from public education, also effectively allowing the already Brahminical administrations and managements to flout reservation policies, and crack down on dissent and depoliticise campuses. The fight against autonomy was most crucial in this particular college, the first Government one to be declared so. The struggle on the ground had been organized mostly by SFI, for whom the college was a stronghold, and managed to organise and close down the campus for a couple weeks back then. They, however, remained silent about the nature of autonomy, wanting to blame it only on the ruling state government for immediate parliamentary benefits and conveniently omit out Kanti Biswas (the ex-education minister of CPM ruled Bengal), who was the head of the report under his own name, that decided on autonomous colleges in the first place. It was with Padantharam's intervention that Kanti

Biswas and WTO and larger agendas beyond the usual rhetoric came into the discourse. Eleven of our comrades were arrested during the protests there, and later released on bail. About a week or so later, SFI gave in, compromising the struggle, in exchange for certain promises but effectively retaining Maharajas as autonomous although some teachers who were transferred as punishment for protesting were taken back.

The effects were almost immediate. As the college took in its first batch of autonomous admissions, five Dalit students were denied admission by the Brahminic, newly autonomous administration (after initially being granted it) citing that they were over age. SFI, despite their numbers, only held symbolic protests and even there, they refrained from talking about the involvement of caste in the issue and firmly standing their ground with the matter being an "age" issue. Padantharam along with other students of Maharajas unaffiliated to mainstream organizations fought against this, and all the students were reinstated exposing how Autonomy effectively takes education out of reach of the marginalized, and showing how compromised struggles did not do much help. Two years on, the college, which students across the state would apply to, still lacks a hostel- not even the dilapidated one it used to have- which means several of the Dalit- Adivasi- Bahujan students who got in would be forced to discontinue because of the lack of affordable hostel facilities.

The challenges we faced were majorly two, before getting into others. Here, and in other instances, when we try to expose the organisations like SFI who claim to be progressive but under this guise serves imperialist Brahminic agendas, have been victims of authoritarianism and physical violence. They tried to push us out by force both in Maharajas College for protests against autonomy, and again in Keralavarma for trying to organize a solidarity march for #ChaloUGC. This is more or less how SFI deals with any organizations, be it SIO, Fraternity, AISA, or even their parliamentary Partner CPI's student wing. Considering how the ABVP is a relatively smaller force here, SFI, who in some campuses take on a soft Brahminic nature, like it's failure to speak on caste, and attacks on other Muslim organisations. The second challenge was the state itself. Not very later after these protests, one of our comrades – an editorial board member was picked up and charged with UAPA for allegedly having posters calling for election boycott. Even while the allegations were false, the Constitution does not, in any case, prohibit people to not vote, nor even give such a call. Our collective was being targeted by the state, and that too with draconian laws and false cases. He was granted bail only about six weeks later. We had organised campaigns and protests against draconian laws.

And now, we are reorganizing as the DSA, to continue the struggles against Autonomous Colleges, Privatisation, Brahminism and Patriarchy in campuses, and to resist the depoliticisation of campus spaces which other mainstream student organizations have been tacitly supporting.

- Democratic Student's Association, Kerala

"The real victory of the struggle is the questions that got raised"

The FTII struggle : An Insider's Account

By now, many of us have heard about the FTII protests. What we have come to know is that it started with the FTII students protesting the appointment of Mr. Gajendra Chauhan as its chairman. Their struggles continue as two students of FTII got arrested at the International Film Festival of India(IFFI), Goa. While such sensational news has always been at the center stage of the media discussions. . It is not merely a question of who becomes the chairman, anymore. There is more to it. This is an interview to seek some answers which many of the students and youth are seeking in an era of disillusionment and disappointments. In that context, this is an interview with Yashasvi Mishra, a student at FTII who was part of the protest from the very beginning. These are excerpts from an insider's account of the struggle.

How did the strike take its form? Why did the strike happen? What was the beginning?

On 12th of June we get to know that Mr. Gajendra Chauhan has been appointed as the chairman of FTII society. After hearing this, my first question was, "Who is Gajendra Chauhan?" A couple of days later we realized that it was not just Gajendra Chauhan, there were four other members .

Anagha Ghaisas - She has made three films in her life of which one justifies the Babri demolition. Another is on an RSS vicharak(advisor) and the third film took her to court where she was found guilty of plagiarisation. The court punished her and the judge went on to say that "she doesn't know the difference between fiction and documentary." Narendra Pathak - whose only credential is

that he was the president of ABVP for 14 years in Maharashtra. In 2013 when FTII students were attacked (and some got head injuries) for screening a film by Anand Patwardhan and organizing KKM performance, it happened under his nose. Mr. Rahul Solapurkar who was supposed to get a ticket in the last election but did not get it, so this position is perhaps his compensation. And the fourth was Shailesh Gupta, who is an FTII pass out and the only considerable contribution of films that he has made is 'Modi is shapath', which is a very bad animation film even in terms of craft.

When we came to know all this, we thought that this has to be a battle and the strike started off.

How many people were there in the beginning? How did you organize ? How did you mobilize people in the campus?

So, certain incidents create the energy. I think everybody was deeply concerned to save the institution from a bunch of people who did not have the desired credentials to be in those positions. FTII society is the topmost policy making body. A Gajendra Chauhan sitting down and laying down the future of the biggest film institution in India, of international repute, was unacceptable. So all of us stood together as one. Under the wisdom tree of FTII, we discussed ideologies, questioned each other, had wonderful discussions regarding the politics of the nation. The first day, there were about 40 of us standing and chanting slogans. It took no time for the entire college to stand together and decide that we are going to fight this till the end.

How did you manage to build a consensus for the cause among the students?

Every student of FTII will have his/her own politics. Cinema is politics. There is nothing that is not politics. You place a camera - it's politics. You write an article - it is politics. And we are not politics averse. We encourage students to have their own inclinations and question each other. The problem is when any one idea or ideology or thought-process tries to dominate the others.

Plurality only enriches the journey. There were disagreements about the form of the protest but everybody agreed on the common minimum point and that was that these 5 people should not become the decision makers. As the strike started, we realized that we will not talk to the government in their language. Let us protest in the language of art and literature and theater and that's how it has been for the past 100 days. This richness and spilling of ideas is our protest, in our language against a state that is unwilling to encourage and listen to plural ideas.

Tell us something about how you perceive the reaction of the government towards the strike?

I think since the beginning itself, the students took a more mature position than the government. After 12th of June, the first official meeting happened on 3rd July with the government where the minister himself was not even willing to discuss the appointments. He said, "I am the finance minister, I will give you money. I will give you infrastructure, air-conditioned classrooms, equipments but I will not discuss appointments.". After that for the next official meeting to happen it took around 70-80 days. In the meantime we took all the FTII students to Delhi to march at the parliament street. There were some 700 odd people, artists, theater people, students joined us in the march but the government refused to speak to us in Delhi.

Did other universities/students contact you to express their solidarity?

We got tremendous support from colleges and institutions across India. We were asked to address an audience at JNU. They promised, assured all possible support.

When we marched in Delhi on Parliament St, we were only 150 from Pune. There were around 600 odd students & artists who walked with us. When I went to LSR, around 70 girls came out from LSR and sat on the garden opposite to LSR with us to show their support & solidarity.

We went to Ahmedabad in NID where around 150 odd students were in auditorium supporting us. At MICA 70 odd students were sitting and listening to us. A faculty of MICA travelled down from Ahemdabad to Pune to deliver an address on alternative forms of Gandhian protest. IIT Chennai, Bangalore National Law School, IRS(?) Pune, Fergusson College Pune. So we've got tremendous support from across institutions and we offered the same support to Presidency and other colleges, and this would continue even if strike ends.

We exchanged letters with students from Biju Pattnaik film institute, talked to them on phone. We realized that if at all anything will happen to institutes in India, something has to be done at the policy making level. I mean, if students are still fighting for equipments in institutes like Biju Pattnaik, something is seriously wrong. Are we headed into a nation devoid and deprived of art, cinema and literature? Is that our idea of nation is? And if that is done with the intention that these mediums are the mediums that raise questions and make poeple think, so defeat these mediums, then it has to be fought at a much larger level.

How do you place this entire struggle in context of what's happening national level including saffronization, question of merit etc.?

India is a plural country. Any attempt made to defeat this plurality is dangerous.

I think, if one Dhabolkar gets murdered, if one Kalburgi gets killed and the prime minister of India doesn't bother to make a statement, it's actually a huge statement that he is making.

The way bans are being imposed. They want to tell me what to eat. They want to tell me what to watch. Whatever is happening in the nation today, the manifestation of that in FTII campus was in the form of these appointments. This is what FTII is doing to fight against any attempt of extreme nature to impose a certain kind of singularity on a nation that's born out of diversity.

But right wing is not only about saffronization, right?
There was a threat of privatization during the strike. Do you think it was a real threat of just a diversion tactics?

It has been a threat for a while now. It is important to understand why we oppose privatisation. Now, the other prominent film school in India, which is a private film school, charges around 20 lakhs per year. The moment one privatises and makes the fees 20 lakhs per year - a lot of students like us would never make it to a film school. It is the government's responsibility to make education available to every student of India no matter what kind of economic background he comes from. If you privatise it, then cinema education will only be left for an exclusive class in the society. A resul Pokutty who came from a lower middle class would have never come into FTII, would have never won an Oscar.

The struggle at FTII has become a symbol. That FTII could get that visibility comes from the fact that it's FTII - a renowned institution. How do you look at the struggle of those small colleges/universities that exist but never make headlines?

The symbol of FTII protest, the art installation outside our main entrance is a question mark, and we kept telling students that raise your questions. Let the spirit of questioning unite you or bind you with the FTII protest. And we absolutely recognize the fact that because of FTII we got the kind of importance we got, but now that we have got that, it is our responsibility to make our question mark become a symbol of questions that are perhaps in the minds of students across. That's how we see our protest becoming more and more inclusive.

For example, if false FIRs can be pressed against us, if certain reports could be floated in the media to malign us - which the government has been indulging from day one, and if it can happen to us, it can happen to any college, any student in India and we are fighting for all of us and we will continue fighting until all of us, irrespective of the corner of the country we belong to, get justice.

As we are talking about a process for these appointments - How do you define merit?

My opposition to Gajendra Chauhan is not because he did C grade films. It was his choice as an artist, as an actor and I respect him for that. He is welcome to walk inside FTII as an artist, as an actor and have a cup of tea under the wisdom tree with us. Now the position we are talking about is the chairman of FTII. The government spread a false news that it's a purely administrative position which is absolutely incorrect. A chairman of an institution sets the vision, decides and defines the exposure, understands the transition, the kind that is happening inside FTII right now - not just in terms of technology or equipments. The chairman and interactions with him will set the tone of the transition. In the field of arts it is very difficult to define the best. However, let us treat FTII as an educational institution. I would use the word "exposure". In the past 30 years Mr. Gajendra Chauhan or these five people have never ever been part of any national or international level seminar, discussion, discourse on cinema. While it is very difficult to define merit - I understand that. But that does not mean that because it is difficult, it could be violated and abused in the manner this government has done. I would also like to tell you that an RTI was filed which showed that Gajendra Chauhan was not on the first list of members which was screened for the chairman's position. Second list - he was not there. Third list - his name appears, same with the society members.

There was an issue about contract workers being thrown out during the strike. What has been their role in the strike? How do they see it?

FTII struggles has always included everyone right form the contract staff to the teaching staff, we understand that many of them are government servants and cant participate in our struggle directly and yet support us from all their heart. There have been a lot of teachers who came out openly. When the students were arrested there were teachers who sat all night inside the police station.

FTII has a history of student struggles. Can you talk about that a little bit?

So far 39 strikes have taken place in FTII, and each of these have taken place at any attempt to privatise FTII. Nit just this government, but all the governments

preceding this one treated us in a step motherly behavior. I am happy to say that in our college, campus interviews don't take place, production houses don't come and offer salary packages. FTII's achievements are not weighed in terms of the salary packages of the students. We are recognised by the quality of our work and nothing else. The government questions that convocation has not taken place since last 17 years but never mentions that for the past 20 years or so FTII students have been winning at different festivals of national and international repute

Where do you place this more than 100 days of strike? What has been the transition in the students individually? What have you learnt from this?

I think somewhere in the past 20-30 yrs, we in a certain way were too indulgent amongst ourselves. This strike took us back on the roads. They took me to Gujarat Vidyapeeth, where 300 people in Ahemdabad are sitting (watching out films). I think when you touch a world you feel. And when an artist feels, he takes a lot back into his art. And I think this strike could make us touch a world that we perhaps were away from for a while now. Individually some of us were in touch, but I think as a collective now FTII is 'sadak' ka FTII. And being back on the sadak is perhaps the biggest takeaway for every artist in FTII right now. How would that manifest into their crafts is something that I leave on them. But it has changed the way we see the world.

Last word

The battle that we have fought is way beyond the outcome of these meetings. The real victory of this battle is the set of questions that got raised during these battles. The question mark that was the installation outside FTII, which was thrashed and broken down several times. They broke one, we made three. They broke three, we made six. If these questions can stay amongst people, I think that is a victory, that perhaps we are looking at, at this moment. And in this victory, believe me, the government doesn't have any role to play.

Neeraja and Kritika

(Source: Aaghaaz students magazine; issue III, December- February 2016)

दिशा छात्र संगठन की रिपोर्ट

छात्रों को संगठित करने के सम्बन्ध में हमारा अप्रोच:-

जब हम क्रांतिकारी छात्र-युवा आन्दोलन की बात करते हैं, तो हमारा तात्पर्य आम जनता के विभिन्न वर्गों से आने वाले छात्रों-युवाओं से ही होता है. लेकिन यदि महानगरों के कॉलेजों-विश्वविद्यालयों के कैंपसों की बात करें तो वहां एकदम गरीब घरों के छात्र कम ही पहुँच पाते हैं. वहां आधी के आसपास आबादी या तो पूंजीपतियों, व्यापारियों, अफ़सरों, धनी किसानों जैसे परजीवी वर्गों के घरों से आती है, जो इस व्यवस्था से अभी उम्मीद पाले हुए हैं और जिंदगी की परेशानियों को झेलते हुए भी, क्रांतिकारी पक्ष चुनने की बजाय बीच में लटके हुए हैं. क्रांतिकारी छात्र आन्दोलन की केन्द्रीय और अगुआ ताक़त आम मेहनतकश घरों और निम्न-मध्यमवर्गीय घरों से आने वाले वे छात्र ही हो सकते हैं जो पूंजीवाद के विरुद्ध निर्णायक संघर्ष के लिए तैयार हों और संस्तरों से आते हैं. उन्हें प्रचार और शिक्षा के द्वारा क्रांतिकारी पक्ष में लाना क्रांतिकारी छात्र-आन्दोलन का एक अहम् कार्यभार है.

गरीब घरों के नौजवान कॉलेजों-विश्वविद्यालयों के कैम्पसों तक नहीं पहुँच पाते. उन्हें उनकी जिन्दगी ही यह सबक सिखला देती है कि पूंजीवादी समाज-व्यवस्था में शिक्षा और रोज़गार का विशेषाधिकार ज्यादातर मुंह में चांदी का चम्मच लेकर पैदा हुए लोगों के लिए ही सुरक्षित है. ख़ासकर,उदारीकरण-निजीकरण के दौर में,शिक्षा ज्यादा धनी लोगों द्वारा ख़रीदी जा सकने वाली और पूंजीपतियों द्वारा बेची जाने वाली चीज बनती जा रही है. आम घरों के लड़के छोटे शहरों-कस्बों के कालेजों से जो डिग्रियां हासिल करते हैं. वे नौकरी दिलाने कि दृष्टि से एकदम बेकार होती हैं. और शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता की दृष्टि से छोटे शहरों-कस्बों के इन छात्रों के रैडिकल व्यवस्था-विरोधी छात्र संगठन बनाने की संभावना अधिक है. हालांकि चेतना के सापेक्षिक पिछड़ेपन के चलते उनके बीच अधिक व्यापक, सघन और लम्बे क्रांतिकारी प्रचार और शिक्षा की कार्रवाई आवश्यक होगी. बड़े महानगरों के उन्नत शिक्षा संस्थानों में उच्च-मध्यवर्ग के छात्रों की बहुलतायत होने के कारण वहां क्रांतिकारी छात्र आन्दोलन का आधार उतना व्यापक नहीं होगा, लेकिन वहां से उन्नत चेतना वाले क्रांतिकारी तत्वों की भरती की संभावना अधिक होगी.

निम्न-मध्यवर्ग के जो युवा या तो उच्च शिक्षा के दायरे में घुस ही नहीं पा रहे हैं, या कैम्पसों से बहार धकेले जा रहे हैं, या बस नाम की डिग्री भर हासिल कर पा रहे हैं, वे लम्बी बेरोजगारी झेलने या अर्द्ध-बेरोजगार के रूप में कोई पार्ट-टाइम नौकरी करने, ट्यूटर या सेल्समैन का काम करने या दिहाड़ी मजदूरों की कतारों में शामिल होने के लिए बाध्य हैं, वे क्रांतिकारी नौजवान आंदोलन की मुख्य ताकत बनेंगे. शिक्षा और रोजगार की लड़ाई लड़ते हुए वे मजदूर आंदोलन के साथ नजदीकी से जुड़ेंगे और फिर पूंजीवाद के विरुद्ध साझा लड़ाइयों में कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर लड़ेंगे.

एक सच्ची छात्र राजनीति का मतलब केवल फीस बढ़ोतरी के विरुद्ध लड़ना, कक्षाओं में सीटें घटाने के विरुद्ध लड़ना, मेस में खराब खाने को लेकर लड़ना, छात्रावासों की संख्या बढ़ाने के लिए लड़ना, कैम्पस में जनवादी अधिकारों के लिए लड़ना या यहाँ तक कि रोजगार के लिए लड़ना मात्र नहीं हो सकता. क्रांतिकारी छात्र राजनीति वही हो सकती है जो कैम्पसों की बाड़ेबंदी को तोड़कर छात्रों को व्यापक मेहनतकश जनता के जीवन और संघर्षों से जुड़ने के लिए तैयार करे और उन्हें इसका ठोस कार्यक्रम दे. ऐसा किये बिना मध्यवर्गीय छात्र अपनी दृष्टि-सीमा का अतिक्रमण नहीं कर सकते. क्रांतिकारी परिवर्तन की भावना वाले छात्रों को राजनीतिक शिक्षा और प्रचार के द्वारा यह बताना होगा कि मजदूर वर्ग और व्यापक मेहनतकश जनता के संघर्षों में प्रत्यक्ष भागीदारी किये बिना और उसके संघर्षों के साथ अपने संघर्षों को जोड़े बिना वे उस पूंजीवादी व्यवस्था को कतई नष्ट नहीं कर सकते जो सभी समस्याओं की जड़ है.

क्रांतिकारी छात्र आन्दोलन के कार्यक्रम को कैम्पस में यह बात अनिवार्य रूप से शामिल होनी चाहिए कि छात्र कार्यकर्ताओं को कैम्पस के आन्दोलनों के अतिरिक्त, अपनी पढाई-लिखाई से समय निकालकर मजदूरों के बीच जाना चाहिए, उनकी जीवन-स्थितियों का अध्यन करना चाहिए. छुट्टियों में उनके साथ रहना चाहिए, अध्ययन-मंडलों, पुस्तकालयों, सांस्कृतिक-राजनीतिक प्रचार कार्यों के द्वारा उन्हें शिक्षित करना चाहिए, उनके आन्दोलनों में शिरकत करनी चाहिए, इस प्रक्रिया में स्वयं शिक्षित होना चाहिए और अपना वर्ग-रूपान्तरण करना चाहिए. भगतसिंह और बटुकेश्वर दत्त ने 19 अक्टूबर 1929 को पंजाब छात्र संघ, लाहौर के दूसरे अधिवेशन के नाम जेल से भेजे गए अपने संदेश में लिखा था कि क्रांति का सन्देश फैक्टरियों-कारखानों, गंदी बस्तियों और गाँवों की झोपड़ियों में रहने वाले करोड़ों मेहनतकशों तक पहुँचाना छात्रों-नौजवानों की जिम्मेदारी है. यह बात आज भी सही है और क्रांतिकारी छात्र आन्दोलन इसकी अनदेखी नहीं कर सकता.

वास्तव में उदारीकरण-निजीकरण की नीतियाँ आज मजदूरों-कर्मचारियों-छात्रों पर हमले का साझा स्रोत हैं. इसलिए छात्रों-नौजवानों को कर्मचारियों और मजदूरों के बीच जाना होगा और उनके आन्दोलनों में शिरकत करनी होगी व उन्हें अपने आन्दोलनों में साथ लेना होगा. फासीवाद का सामाजिक आधार उन सामाजिक संस्तरों में बहुत तेजी से बढ़ रहा है जो संकटग्रस्त पूंजीवादी अर्थव्यवस्था में सबसे असुरक्षित स्थिति में है. क्रांतिकारी छात्र राजनीति को इन सामाजिक संस्तरों के बीच क्रांतिकारी प्रचार के जरिये जागृत करना होगा और उन्हें फासीवादी प्रभाव से बाहर निकालना होगा.

आरक्षण के सम्बन्ध में हमारी राय:-

आरक्षण जिस दौर में लागू हुआ उस दौर में इसका लागू होना एक जनवादी मांग थी, लेकिन आज के समय में आरक्षण एक विभ्रम बनकर रह गया है जिसका इस्तेमाल शासक वर्ग आज उत्पीड़ित वर्गों को आपस में लड़ाने के लिए कर रहा है. यह सही है कि दलित आबादी का एक बड़ा हिस्सा आज शोषित है, लेकिन कुल शोषित आबादी में अगर देखें तो दलितों की संख्या थोड़ी सी ही है. ऐसे में आज जाति और वर्ग के एक-दूसरे

के ओवरलैप करने की बात कहना ही सरासर गलत है. सही बात तो यह है कि आज जाति आधारित आरक्षण से दलित आबादी के रोजगार जैसी बुनियादी सवालों को भी हल नहीं किया जा सकता. उलटे जाति आधारित आरक्षण की मांग अस्मितावादी राजनीति को मजबूत करने का ही काम करती है. गुर्जर, जाट और पटेलों के आरक्षण की मांग इसी राजनीति की एक बानगी है. वास्तव में इतने सालों के आरक्षण के बाद भी आज दलितों की केवल 11% हिस्सा मध्यवर्ग या उच्च मध्यवर्ग तक उठ पाया है. बाकी का 89% हिस्सा खेतिहर या औद्योगिक मजदूर है. दूसरी बात यह कि 86% दलित बच्चे स्कूली शिक्षा से ही 'ड्राप आउट' हो जाते हैं. ऐसे में इस आबादी को आरक्षण का लाभ कैसे मिलेगा?

ऐसे में, हमारा कहना है कि हमें आरक्षण के पक्ष और विपक्ष में नहीं फँसना चाहिए। यह शासक वर्ग का 'ट्रैप' है; वे यही चाहते हैं कि इस पूरे मसले की सच्चाई को समझने की बजाय हम पक्ष या विपक्ष की अवस्थिति अपना लें और आपस में ही लड़ पड़ें। हमारा कहना है कि आज जो आरक्षण है, उसकी सीटें न भरना भ्रष्टाचार है और हमें इसका विरोध करना चाहिए मगर साथ ही हमें दलित मेहनतकश अवाम को भी समझाना चाहिए कि आरक्षण के रास्ते अब कुछ विशेष हासिल नहीं होने वाला है। हमें आज वर्ग-आधारित जाति-विरोधी आन्दोलन खड़ा करते हुए 'सभी को समान व निशुल्क शिक्षा व सभी को रोजगार' को बुनियादी अधिकार बनाने के लिए लड़ना चाहिए।

दिशा छात्र संगठन के कुछ हालिया कार्यक्रमों की रिपोर्ट:-

दिशा छात्र संगठन की देश के अलग-अलग हिस्सों में सक्रिय इकाइयों की ओर से संकल्प, ज्वार, संवेग आदि मासिक दीवार पत्रिकाएं निकाली जाती हैं जो परिसर एवं आम आबादी के बीच में काफी लोकप्रिय हैं. पिछले लम्बे समय से पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश, दिल्ली, पटना, हरियाणा में सक्रिय दिशा छात्र संगठन की विभिन्न इकाइयाँ क्रान्तिकारी नवजागरण के तहत भगतसिंह, राजगुरु, सुखदेव, काकोरी काण्ड के शहीदों, सावित्रीबाई फूले, चन्द्रशेखर आज़ाद जैसे क्रांतिकारियों के जन्मदिवस शहादत दिवस आदि पर हर वर्ष प्रदेशव्यापी साप्ताहिक, 15 दिवसीय या मासिक अभियान ले रही हैं. इसके अलावा फासीवाद, आर्थिक मन्दी, आरक्षण, रोजगार का संकट, राष्ट्रवाद, मीडिया, जाति, आर्थिक उदारीकरण-निजीकरण की नीतियों आदि सवालों पर नियमित अध्ययन-चक्र, गोष्ठियां आदि आयोजित करता रहा है. इसके साथ ही छात्र आन्दोलनों में ऐफ़.टी.आई.आई. पुणे के संघर्षों पर, यू.जी.सी. नॉन-नेट फेलोशिप, रोहित वेमुला की आत्महत्या, जे.एन.यू. पर हमला, यू.जी.सी. की परीक्षा को साल में एक बार किये जाने आदि के विरुद्ध लगातार संघर्षरत है. इसके साथ ही साथ विभिन्न परिसरों में हरियाणा के रोहतक, कुरुक्षेत्र विश्वविद्यालय, गोरखपुर, इलाहाबाद, दिल्ली, पटना आदि जगहों पर स्थित इकाइयाँ लगातार परिसर के सवालों पर सक्रिय हैं.

दिल्ली के सरकारी विद्यालयों में इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर की दिक्कतों, बिहार बोर्ड द्वारा बड़े पैमाने पर परिणामों में घपले बाजी करते हुए छात्रों को फेल किये जाने आदि के खिलाफ लगातार आन्दोलन चलाए गए. इलाहाबाद में पिछले दिनों अखिल भारतीय विद्यार्थी परिषद् द्वारा विभिन्न छात्र संगठनों के कार्यक्रमों में बाधा पहुंचाने के खिलाफ सांप्रदायिक फासीवाद विरोधी मंच. परिसर में कम होते जनवादी स्पेस के खिलाफ फोरम फॉर कैम्पस डेमोक्रेसी बनाकर विभिन्न प्रगतिशील और जनवादी संगठनों के साथ लड़ाइयाँ लड़ी गयीं. इसके अलावा बंगलुरु और नई दिल्ली में नववर्ष की पूर्व संध्या पर महिलाओं के उत्पीड़न, फिलिस्तीन, कश्मीर की जनता के साथ एकजुटता, होंडा और मारुति के मजदूर आन्दोलनों के प्रति एकजुटता,

दादरी और प्रो. कलबुर्गी की हत्या जैसी घटनाओं, पहलू खान और मासूम जुनैद की हत्या के विरोध में भी आम जनता और छात्रों के बीच व्यापक अभियान तथा संयुक्त मोर्चे के तहत कार्यक्रम किये गए. वर्तमान में 'सबको समान शिक्षा और सबको रोजगार के समान अवसर' के मुद्दे पर पूरे पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश में एक आम प्रचार अभियान जारी है. साथ ही साथ उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार द्वारा 50 साल की उम्र पूरी कर चुके कर्मचारियों को अक्षमता के आधार पर अनिवार्य सेवानिवृत्ति देने के फैसले के विरुद्ध छात्रों-मजदूरों-कर्मचारियों की एकजुटता बनाने के लिए अभियान चलाया जा रहा है. साथ ही इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय, रोहतक समेत कई जगहों पर छात्रों की मांगों पर आन्दोलन अभी जारी है.

- दिशा छात्र संगठन